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ABSTRACT

This journal serves the profession by providing a medium for the sharing of information, ideas, and concerns among teachers, administrators, researchers, and others interested in the early learning of languages. Articles in this volume include the following: "Foreign Language Teaching: What We Can Learn from Other Countries" (Ingrid U. Pufahl, Nancy C. Rhodes, Donna Christian); "Early Modern Language Programs in Hungary" (Marianne Nikolov); "Learning through Dialogue Journal Writing: A Cultural Thematic Unit" (Jeanette Marie Bowman Borich); and "Japanese Distance Learning: A Kansas Summer Program for Children" (Colleen Brooks, Edmee Fernandez). (KFT)

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Learning Languages, 2000-2001.

Marcia H. Rosenbusch, Editor

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Learning Languages

The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning

Fall 2000
Vol.6 No.1

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Learning Languages: The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning is the official publication of NNELL. It serves the profession by providing a medium for the sharing of information, ideas, and concerns among teachers, administrators, researchers, and others interested in the early learning of languages. The journal reflects NNELL's commitment to promoting opportunities for all children to develop a high level of competence in at least one language and culture in addition to their own. See the inside of the back cover for more information on NNELL.

In an effort to address the interests of the profession, both practical and scholarly articles are published. Practical articles describe innovative approaches to teaching and the administration of effective language programs for children. Scholarly articles report on original research and cite both current research and theory as a basis for making recommendations for practice. Scholarly articles are refereed, i.e., reviewed anonymously by at least three readers. Readers include members of the NNELL executive board, the editorial advisory board, and invited guest reviewers who have expertise in the area. Refereed articles are identified as such in the journal. Write to the editor to request a copy of author guidelines for preparing articles, or retrieve them from NNELL's website: www.educ.iastate.edu/nnell

Submissions: Deadlines are: fall issue—May 1; winter issue—Nov. 1; spring issue—Feb. 1. Articles, classroom activities, and materials may be submitted to the appropriate contributing editor (see below). Send announcements, conference information, and original children's work (such as line drawings, short stories, and poems) to the editor. Children's work needs to be accompanied by written permission from the child's parent or guardian and must include the child's name, age, school, and the teacher's name, address, and telephone (add fax and e-mail address, if available).

Submit a favorite classroom activity for the "Activities for Your Classroom" section by sending a description of the activity that includes title, context, objectives, targeted standards, materials, procedure, and assessment. Include pictures or drawings as illustration, if available. Send with your name, address, and phone number to the Classroom Activities editor listed below.

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Notes from the President

MAKING A DIFFERENCE . . .

If there is one topic about which our students, politicians, and the public seem to agree, it's the importance of teachers. Everyone is sure that the way to improve student learning is to improve the quality of teachers. Parents have always believed that it matters a lot who their child's teacher is. As a parent, I always worried about the teachers my kids had, because I've always believed that a school is only as good as a child's teacher in a given year. And in many places, the success of early language programs rests squarely on the shoulders of the quality of teachers.

Good teaching matters. Research says so over and over again. In fact, bad teaching matters so much that it takes several years of good teaching for an elementary school student to compensate for the effects of just one bad teacher. Data from a massive and sophisticated study conducted in Tennessee show remarkable differences among teachers who worked with low-achieving students. The least-effective teachers produced student gains of about 14 percentile points a year on standardized tests. The most-effective teachers, in stark contrast, produced gains of 53 percentile points.

Good teaching means good teachers. The public and legislatures are clamoring for higher standards for teachers and who could disagree? Teachers, the people to whom we entrust our most valuable natural resource—our children—should demonstrate the highest possible level of competence. Good teaching irrevocably alters the mind. Like brain surgeons, we have got to keep learning. None of us would want brain surgery performed by someone who had not updated his or her skills and knowledge for 20 years . . . not even 10 . . . heck, not even 5! Just like brain surgeons, we have to keep current on how we can best do our work.

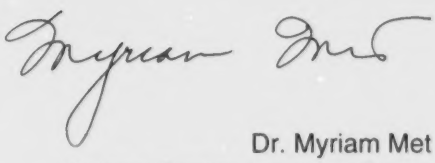
As teachers, we must strive (as the Army recruiters tell us) to be the best we can be. To do that, we engage in continual professional growth. Professional growth can emanate from important instructional problems that teachers need and want to solve and can help us explore solutions in our own classrooms. In this way, professional growth is embedded in the essence of the tasks we carry out as part of our jobs. As reflective practitioners, we can enhance our professional knowledge and skills by reflecting upon instructional situations and analyzing classroom experiences to try to solve instructional problems. Professional dialogues, conversations, and study groups with peers and other experts also help us build common understandings of our practice. For these reasons, NNELL networking sessions can be a vital source of new understandings about teaching languages to younger learners.

Most of us went into teaching because we cared: we cared about our subject; we cared about the public good; we cared about kids. We still do. Teaching foreign languages to young learners is meaningful and exciting work. I want to close by sharing with you thoughts of an eighteenth-century theologian, John Wesley. On those tough days, when it's important to remember that what

we do can makes a real difference in children's lives, these are thoughts that inspire me to keep on fighting for quality foreign language experiences for all children. I hope they will be meaningful for you too.

Do all the good that you can
By all the means that you can
In all the ways that you can,
In all the places that you can
At all the times that you can
To all the people that you can
As long as you ever can.

—John Wesley



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★ ★

The ACTFL National Textbook Company Award for Building Community Interest in Foreign Language Education

One of the students of Catherine B. (Kay) Hewitt, Lexington Elementary School, Lexington, South Carolina, described this year's winner of the ACTFL-NTC Award as follows: "Madame Hewitt is a French bottle of champagne!" Kay, who is NNELL's Political Action and Advocacy Co-Chair, is the ultimate "Builder of Community Interest in Foreign Language Education." She is superhuman when advocating for K–12 foreign language education for all students at the local, state, and national levels.

Advocacy and the 5 C's, especially the 5th C—Communities, are evident throughout every single day as she teaches French to her students at Lexington Elementary School. Once the school day ends and most teachers are exhausted, Kay recharges! She continues to create French language and cultural events and activities, which involve not only her students, but also parents and the community at large. For Kay there are no borders, just a worldwide neighborhood. Throughout South Carolina, as well as throughout the United States, this tireless, fervent, and selfless professional serves as a resource for the development and maintenance of elementary school foreign language programs.

One letter of support in Kay's dossier contained this description of her: "She is a little ball of energy knocking down the wall of apathy with her sledgehammer of pure determination." A parent writes, "I have had occasion to witness and participate in a few of Mme's lessons. Firstly, I was struck by the fact Mme. Hewitt speaks only French to her students at all times. Mme. conducts the entire lesson in French, without exception, whether greeting the children, teaching the lesson itself, or simply instructing students where to sit. Whether in the halls, the cafeteria, or on morning car-greeting duty, Mme. Hewitt greets and speaks to the children in French and encourages them to respond likewise. This enables the children to view French as a usable language in everyday settings, and not something that is isolated to the French classroom."

A second grade teacher writes, "Around our very large elementary school, Kay injects teachers with French Fever. She realizes that if you can get a teaching faculty of nearly one hundred teachers to understand and help spread your message then you can have a powerful voice. She has used her foreign language instruction to help reinforce our reading, writing, and arithmetic curricula. As parents in our growing community question us about the French program at Lexington Elementary, we speak with the voice Kay has given to us."

Congratulations to Madame Kay B. Hewitt!

— Martie Semmer

★ ★

Early Modern Language Programs in Hungary

Marianne Nikolov
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Hungary is a small land-locked Central European country with a population of ten and a half million. The majority of the population speaks Hungarian as the mother tongue, and the most important ethnic minority groups speak German, Croatian, Rumanian, Slovakian, and Roma. For centuries Latin was the official language; Hungarian did not assume this role until the middle of the nineteenth century. Because of the history of Hungary and its geographic location, the most important foreign language has been German. But in 1949, for political reasons, Russian became the compulsory foreign language in state primary schools from the age of 10 through secondary and in the first two years of post-secondary education. Because of a lack of motivation for learning the language, the vast majority of the population boasted of not even being able to ask for a glass of water in Russian after 10 years of study.

This tradition suddenly changed in 1989 when, as a result of political and social changes, foreign language learning became liberalized and most teachers of Russian found themselves without pupils. Since then English and German have become dominant in state education, but the popularity of these languages dates back to the late 1960s. For the last three decades English and German have been the most requested foreign languages in extracurricular courses, evening classes, and the private sector.

Despite the fact that Russian did not become a popular foreign language, Hungarians have generally positive attitudes toward learning and knowing modern languages, but only a low percentage of the population would claim to know one. To illustrate the point, a representative inquiry conducted in 1994 found that about 17% of adults said they had a working knowledge of German, 12% of English, and 9% of Russian, while other languages ranged from 1% to 2% (Terestyéni, 1996, p. 4). The majority (90%) of respondents with secondary education background and about 60% of college and university graduates claimed that they could not communicate in any foreign language. On the other hand, 84% of the participants said they wanted to study a modern language. Since the major changes in 1989, and because most joint enterprises and new businesses require a working knowledge of English or German, it has become a major challenge for Hungarians to develop proficiency in Western languages (for more detail see Nikolov, 1999a, pp. 14–18).

An Overview of the Educational System

Primary education begins at the age of 6, but prior to the first year in school all children are expected to

attend kindergarten for at least a year; therefore all children start pre-school at the age of 5. Although recently children can begin their secondary education at the ages of 10, 12, or 14, most of them follow the traditional track and at age 14 enter one of three types of secondary schools: grammar schools, vocational schools, or trade schools. Grammar schools represent the most traditional type of education, with strong academic curricula, requiring students to study two foreign languages. Vocational schools start focusing on professions as well as trade quite early and require one language. Trade schools usually do not offer language study, although some have recently introduced foreign language courses. Students in grammar schools take an exam in a foreign language as part of their school-exit examination. Compulsory education lasts ten years, and the earliest age to leave school is 16; the majority finish school at the age of 18.

The Hungarian educational pendulum has gone from one extreme to the other over the last few decades. Until the late 1980s the system was completely controlled: all students followed exactly the same curricula and syllabi and learned the same units from the same textbooks at the same time of the year. In 1989 the old curriculum became outdated, but since there was no new one to replace it, teachers were suddenly given the freedom to do what they liked while a new national curriculum was being developed.

The National Core Curriculum (*Nemzeti Alaptanterv,* 1995), which was introduced in 1998, defines the first 10 years of state education. The curricula of the last two years of secondary education are regulated only by the school-exit examinations. Now the government is trying to introduce new syllabi for each subject to implement the aims of the National Core Curriculum and to establish new procedures for quality control.

Foreign Languages in the Curriculum

The general objectives of the National Core Curriculum for foreign languages require the teaching of at least one foreign language for practical use and focus on the development of oral and written communication skills. From the point of view of foreign language education, the document represents a step backward: the old curriculum introduced Russian in grade 4 (age 10), but the new curriculum introduces it a year later, in grade 5. Previously two modern languages were mandatory in state education and now only one is, except in grammar schools. In addition, weekly hours are not allocated to subject areas any more and decisions are made locally. Therefore, many teachers fear that the overall time dedicated to modern languages may decrease.

Despite the failure of Russian teaching from age 10, a relatively early start with no obvious success, and the fact that officially foreign languages are to be introduced in grade 5, today's reality is different. Children in early language programs receive an average of 1 to 2 lessons a week—each 45 minutes long—or 3 to 4 lessons in specialized classes. In most cases, local authorities sponsor these programs by manipulating their budgets and make early language studies an integral part of the school curricula. Sometimes parents also contribute to defray the costs. If the school cannot ensure financing of the program, language classes are extracurricular, with schools providing only the space.

Over the last decade early modern language programs have mushroomed all over the country, and the ratio of students studying Western languages in primary schools has increased significantly. In 1996–97 German was studied by slightly more primary-school children (51.5%) than English (45.3%), while only 1.3% studied French and 1.5% Russian (Imre, 1999, p. 201). On the other

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hand, in secondary schools English is more popular (64%) than German (56%) (Vágó, 1999). The pressure on schools is enormous. Although the officially suggested starting age is 11, most parents want their children to start learning a foreign language as soon as possible. Folk wisdom also supports the general assumption of "the sooner the better." Schools need to meet these parental wishes in order to attract more children and receive more financial support per child from the ministry.

As Table 1 illustrates, over 40% of the children in grade 3 (age 8–9) study a foreign language, and many of them start as early as grades 1 and 2, four to five years before the age required by the National Core Curriculum. Table 1 also illustrates that about 5% of the population never receive any foreign language instruction. These tend to be children in small villages where there are no early language programs. When these students join bigger schools at age 11, they already lag behind the others. Therefore, they are exempted from learning any foreign language. Most of these children, who never have a chance to learn languages belong to the biggest ethnic group, Romas (Girán & Kardos, 1997). Often the argument against providing them foreign language study is that they would not be able to develop skills in a modern language because they need extra Hungarian classes.

Studies of the language development of Roma children are hard to find. A recent inquiry examined 158 six-year-olds in nine different educational contexts, including town and village schools where Hungarian and Gypsy pupils attend first grade. Some Roma children performed as well on tasks as their Hungarian partners, irrespective of whether the home language was Hungarian or Gypsy, or whether the children were monolingual or bilingual. The only predictor of success was social background, (Derdák & Varga, 1996). Therefore, excluding Roma children from foreign language classes is not supported by empirical evidence and is contrary to their interest.

On the other hand, about 5% of the children are privileged to be able learn two foreign languages: one language from first, second, or third grade and a second from fifth or seventh. In these cases the first foreign language tends to be taught in intensive courses. Altogether 21% of school children attend intensive courses at the primary-school level (Vágó, 1999, p. 141). Intensive courses teach 2 to 3 classes a week in the first three or four grades and 4 to 5

Table 1: The Number and Percentage of Primary-School Pupils Studying Foreign Languages in Hungarian State Schools in 1996–97

Grade	Number of Pupils Studying Foreign Languages in Year	Percentage
1	19,859	15.9
2	26,815	22.6
3	49,034	40.9
4	112,655	94.3
5	118,631	95.2
6	114,089	04.2
7	114,233	95.6
8	113,503	95.9
Total	668,819	

Note: Adapted from Vágó, 1997 in Halász & Lannert, 1998, p. 430.

classes from grade 5. There is, however, much variation in programs, depending on the availability of teachers and resources.

The German language has played a special role in Hungarian education for reasons that are historical, geographic, ethnic, and economic. The tradition of teaching German dates back to the history of the Habsburg-Hungarian monarchy. In addition, the shared border with Austria, the proximity of Germany, the presence of German minority groups in Hungary, and the importance of links in economy and tourism provide explanations for the predominance of German among foreign languages. Recent data suggest that most of the students learning German in ethnic schools do not come from ethnic backgrounds, but rather from professional families in which parents place a strong emphasis on an early start (Imre, 1999). Some of these early German programs are content-based partial immersion and are continued in a similar ethnic disguise in posh partial-immersion secondary institutions, thus exploiting government money allocated for ethnic education (Imre, 1999, p. 194).

Teachers of Modern Languages

Teachers in Hungary are poorly paid and cannot survive on state salaries; therefore, most of the teachers are women. Language teachers are thought to be fortunate because they can give private lessons and make ends meet by working for private language schools to supplement their primary income. Yet this situation results in teachers being overworked and underpaid. Four different types of foreign language teaching degrees exist in Hungary:

- Five-year single- or double-major university degrees qualify teachers to teach at any institution, most importantly in secondary schools. This is the most prestigious teaching degree, but in most of the cases trainees do no primary-school practice, although they can teach young learners.
- Four-year double-major college degrees qualify teachers to work at primary schools and teach foreign languages in grades 5 to 8.
- Three-year single-major college degree holders are qualified to teach across the range of educational institutions. This is the most recent type of teaching degree.
- Four-year lower-primary college degrees with a language specialization allow teachers to work in grades 1–6, but most frequently they are hired for grades 1–4.

Holders of the first three types of degrees work as language specialists, while teachers with lower-primary degrees are either classroom teachers who teach their classes and a foreign language as well, or work as language specialists in the lower-primary section of their schools. As a general tendency, it can be claimed that there seems to be a strong relationship between the length and quality of the teacher education program, its prestige, and the target age group that graduates are qualified to teach. Unfortunately, the least amount of curricular input in the target language and culture characterizes the lower-primary teaching degree.

The most serious problem is that there are not enough appropriately qualified teachers in the right posts. Teachers with prestigious degrees find well-paid jobs in business or the private sector, while teachers qualified to teach in primary schools often upgrade their degrees to work in secondary institutions. In 1991–92 less than half of the teachers of English had a teaching degree. Schools were so much in need of teaching staff that they allowed people of other professions or teachers of other subject areas to teach a foreign language with an intermediate-level language certificate. Since then the situation has improved: almost 5,000 teachers of Russian and of other

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The fact that not all of the teachers presently working with young learners are qualified or motivated is a potential threat to early programs.

subjects have graduated from three-year retraining in-service programs at universities and colleges (Vágó, 1999, p. 153), and new pre-service teacher-training programs have been implemented.

Despite the efforts of the ministry and international organizations such as the United States Information Agency, the Peace Corps, and the British Council, prospects are still grim for various reasons. Although, for instance, in 1997–98 over 3,000 foreign language majors were admitted to post-secondary education, over half of the graduating teachers do not take up teaching in state schools, mostly for financial reasons (Vágó, 1999). To illustrate the point, a young graduate with some computer skills can make about four times more money at an international firm than at a state school, and hourly rates at private language schools are triple those in post-secondary institutions.

The majority (65%) of foreign language teachers in primary-school posts are ex-Russian teachers (Halász & Lannert, 1998, p. 273), many of whom lack the proficiency, self-confidence, and methodological background necessary in the communicative classroom of young learners. Teachers with better skills used opportunities in the early 1990s to accept posts in secondary schools or in the private sector. Although these teachers at primary schools are familiar with the principles, techniques, and resources of language teaching to young learners, they find them hard to implement in the classroom and very often rely on the old traditional procedures inherited from their Russian teaching. They focus on form, use drills and rote-learning techniques, and rely on the Hungarian language excessively (Nikolov, 1999b & 1999c); thus preventing young learners from developing the appropriate oral skills with which they could later outperform older beginners.

On the whole, the success of early language teaching in Hungary depends on how appropriately qualified, enthusiastic teachers can be attracted to teach in the lower-primary section. The fact that not all of the teachers presently working with young learners are qualified or motivated is a potential threat to early programs. The next section discusses the availability of resources and other conditions of successful language teaching in Hungarian schools.

Resources of Early Programs

The interest in early foreign language instruction has increased during the last few years all over the world. Publishers are offering a smorgasbord of attractive teaching materials and resources that are accessible to Hungarian teachers at bookshops, conferences, and workshops regularly held by experts and publishers all over the country. Unfortunately, the availability of resources cannot counterbalance all the shortcomings in Hungarian classrooms. Early immersion does not exist, and content-based instruction is rare, although teachers' manuals encourage such approaches. Very few teachers supplement officially suggested course books or exploit realia, authentic materials, and student-made materials (Nikolov, 1999b).

When in 1996 Hurst, Derda, and Lawson conducted research into what materials lower-primary teachers use, they identified the following major tendencies:

- Most of the published materials teachers used were British publications, with Hungarian course materials lagging far behind
- Many teachers "over-taught" textbooks: materials designed for one year were exploited for 3–4 years, thus making progress very slow and focused on rote learning, testing, and intensive study of every word
- Some schools used a completely different textbook each year and, in a number of cases, three different Level One books were

used in the same school
- Often textbooks that teachers used with particular groups did not match the age level for which they were designed.

Young Learners' Attitudes and Motivation

As indicated earlier, Hungarians' general attitudes toward learning and knowing foreign languages are favorable. A peculiar indication of this phenomenon is the fact that almost 60% of the children receive private tutoring, most frequently for modern languages, during their primary-school years (Gazsó, 1997, p. 25). This high percentage has two reasons. Some ambitious parents are extremely committed to their children's progress in school, thus they hire private tutors to give their children special opportunities. Others pay for extra classes because their children need special attention to be able to fulfill school requirements. In both cases parents are obviously dissatisfied with what free state education can provide.

As for young learners' attitudes and motivation toward modern languages, two studies are informative: the first is cross-sectional; the second, longitudinal. Dörnyei, Nyilasi, and Clément (1996) investigated the attitudes and motivation of 4,765 eighth graders (age 14) in 212 classes across the country. Children were asked to rank order the first three languages of their choice. The results indicated that the first three languages were English, German, and French, followed by Italian, Russian, and Spanish, with English and German far ahead of the other languages. The study also found a strong preference among students for American English in contrast to British English, indicating a strong U.S. influence through popular culture. This finding is interesting in light of the fact that most teaching materials used in primary schools are British publications.

This study also looked into children's self-confidence concerning their abilities for achieving proficiency. Their average on a 1 to 5 scale was high, (3.73), and they agreed with the statement that learning a foreign language was a hard job (3.36). These data indicate that Hungarian children have positive attitudes toward language study; most of them expect to be successful in the long run, and they know that serious effort is necessary for them to achieve good results.

The other study (Nikolov, 1999d) explored why children between the ages of 6 and 14 thought they were learning English, what tasks they liked and disliked, and to what extent the traditional taxonomy of instrumental and integrative motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) could be applied to the Hungarian educational context. Findings indicate that the role of integrative motivation (the type of motivation traditionally identified with a higher success rate, related to a positive relationship with speakers of the target language) is unimportant, and young children are not motivated instrumentally either (that is, long-term goals related to the usefulness of knowing languages do not influence them significantly). They progress in the target language if they find classroom activities worth the trouble.

Nikolov's study (1999d) also examined how Hungarian children's motivation changed over their eight years of learning English in three groups in a primary school, all with the same teacher. The study found that the most important motivating factors for children between 6 and 14 years of age included positive attitudes toward the learning context and the teacher; intrinsically motivating activities, tasks, and materials; and they were more motivated by classroom practice than integrative or instrumental reasons. Knowledge as an aim gradually overtook the role of external motivating factors such as rewards and approval. Instrumental motives emerged around the age of 11 or 12, but they remained vague and general.

The most important finding with

. . . almost 60% of the children receive private tutoring, most frequently for modern languages, during their primary-school years.

. . . long-term success will not be available unless later programs build on early language study.

classroom implications from Nikolov's (1999d) study relates to the way causes of motivation were found to vary by age. For very young children, classes must be fun, and the teacher is the focus. The development of self-confidence also seems to play a major role and external rewards slowly lose some of their attractiveness. Instrumental motives do emerge over the years, but they are balanced by classroom-related motives, even at the age of 14.

As these two surveys show, Hungarian children's attitudes and motivation are favorable toward developing their language skills, but it is essential that young learners find ways of using their hard-won limited proficiency for meaningful purposes. Although some satellite programs in English, mostly American, have become available throughout the country, only a few of them provide learners with comprehensible input.

One of the challenging ways of maintaining motivation to learn the target language is through communication with speakers of the language. Many Hungarian teachers of foreign languages would like to develop links for their learners with both native speakers and other learners of the same foreign language. Such links may not only ensure children's interest, but also could strengthen cultural awareness and understanding. Several schools with German programs have established links with German or Austrian partners. As most Hungarian schools now have access to the Internet, it would be useful for learners of English to develop partnerships with American schools. (If any reader knows of such target groups, the author of this article is willing to arrange such matches. Please contact nikolov@btk.pte.hu.)

Conditions of Early Language Programs

One of the basic assumptions concerning success in learning foreign languages relates to continuity and intensity of programs. Language teaching may begin very early; its aims may be appropriate concerning the length of instruction and students' needs, but long-term success will not be available unless later programs build on early language study. What children learn in early years must be maintained and further developed to be useful to them as adults. Unfortunately, despite all the encouraging achievements, in many cases a waste of effort and energy is one of the characteristics of early language education in Hungary. The reasons are manifold:

- Early language programs vary greatly thus, it is often impossible to stream children with similar language-learning histories into homogenous groups within primary-school programs
- Secondary schools rarely integrate children's previous language experience in their programs, therefore many children end up as false beginners and become frustrated
- Children often start a brand new foreign language in secondary schools because they are given no opportunities to continue their first foreign language
- Many primary-school teachers use inappropriate methodology, make unrealistic demands, and frustrate learners at an early stage
- Parents often have unrealistic expectations and want immediate results
- Sometimes minimal educational requirements are neglected: children are scheduled in classes of very short periods, such as 20 minutes a week; classes are often inappropriately scheduled into the daily routine of children: children "study" while their peers have recess or free time after school; classes are held in tiny rooms or impossible locations such as, dining halls or small rooms, where physical activities are limited.

Very often parents and school administrators do not realize how important

it is to address all of the above concerns for early language programs to be successful.

Conclusion

This overview gives the reader some insight into the teaching of modern languages to young learners in Hungary. It has demonstrated how different the educational context is from the United States and how the Prussian educational tradition still influences today's processes. Hungary has a large number of children participating in early language programs, in response to parents' demand. Hungary has come a long way since 1989: now there are enough qualified teachers in the country, but unfortunately many of the teachers working with young learners do so because they cannot find more prestigious jobs.

As for the quality of early programs, in Hungary no studies have examined whether an early start is more favorable than a later one. The failure of Russian teaching has proven that even an early start cannot counterbalance the lack of other factors necessary for successful language learning. Realistic aims need to be set for early programs. It is extremely important to make teachers and parents understand what young children are capable of achieving, and how attitudinal and linguistic gains may contribute to success in adulthood. The attitudinal perspective is often neglected; all stakeholders are focused on language proficiency, forgetting the fact that what children learn in primary schools may not be directly useful to them as adult speakers of the language. Therefore, research is needed to explore how early language experiences contribute to the development of language proficiency over the years and how inadequate conditions may prevent some children from becoming successful.

Teacher education seems to be one of the cornerstones of successful early language programs. Enthusiastic teachers who set realistic aims, apply relevant classroom techniques, and motivate children tend to come up with good results. The other decisive factor is continuity of programs. Early language education may be a waste of time unless secondary schools build on what primary schools have contributed to children's foreign language development.

Teacher education seems to be one of the cornerstones of successful early language programs.

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Note: *Marianne Nikolov teaches courses on applied linguistics at Janus Pannonius University, Pécs. She is the author of various teaching materials for young learners of English and articles on child foreign language learning. She has published and edited work on various topics of language education. Her address for correspondence is Dept. of English Applied Linguistics, JPTE, Pécs, 7624, Ifjúság u. 6., Hungary, Her e-mail is nikolov@btk.pte.hu.*

Small Grants for Research in Early Foreign Language Education

The National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center at Iowa State University is offering grants for research in early foreign language education. The goal of this program is to increase interest in research on early foreign language education by making small research awards available to promising doctoral students or researchers in the field. This program will provide from three to six awards ranging from $1,000 to $2,000 each during 2001–2002.

Who Is Eligible to Apply?
Graduate students registered in doctoral programs within the United States that lead to a degree with a specialization in foreign language education or assessment are eligible to apply for a grant. The student's dissertation proposal must have been approved by an appropriate committee at the candidate's university and must focus on some aspect of early foreign language learning.

Researchers within the United States at institutions of higher education and at school districts that have early foreign language programs are eligible to apply if their research addresses early foreign language learning.

What Can You Propose to Do?
Applicants are encouraged to address critical research questions on early foreign language learning that have been identified in the literature (or related questions), for example:

- What levels of language proficiency can we expect among participants in early foreign language learning programs?
- What aspects of culture should be promoted?
- How does foreign language learning help or hinder children with identified language-perceptual difficulties?
- What factors influence administrators' decisions on the implementation, continuation, and cancellation of elementary school foreign language programs?
- How does the number of contact hours of instruction relate to achievement of language learning objectives?
- What teacher variables are most consistently associated with achievement of language learning objectives?
- What is the effect of multimedia on children's learning of foreign language?

For More Information:
National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center, N131 Lagomarcino Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; 515-294-6699; Fax: 515-294-2776; E-mail: nflrc@iastate.edu; Web site: www.educ.iastate.edu/nflrc.

NNELL Election Results

NNELL is happy to announce that Martha "Martie" Singer Semmer has been elected as second vice-president for a three-year term, and Marcia J. Pastorek has been re-elected as secretary for a two-year term. We would like to introduce Martie and Marcia to you.

Martie Singer Semmer

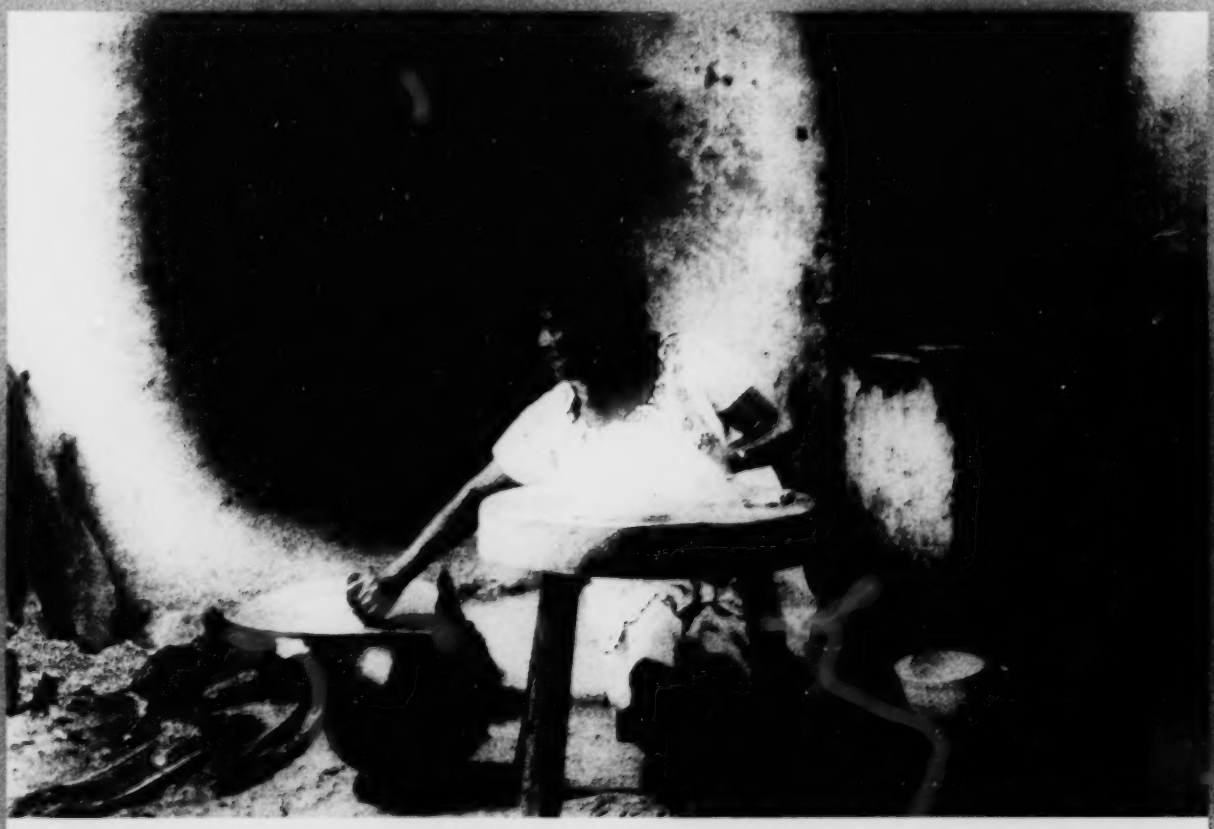
Martie Semmer was a faculty member with the Department of Hispanic Studies at the University of Northern Colorado, in Greeley during the 1999–2000 academic year. While at UNC, she co-developed a FLES methods course. For 20 years prior to 1999, Martie was a P–12 Spanish teacher with Summit School District RE-1 in Colorado, during which time she planned and implemented a districtwide K–5 Spanish program. Martie's leadership roles have included serving as president of the Colorado Congress of Foreign Language Teachers and as a member of the AATSP K–16 Student Standards Task Force. Currently, she is ending a 4-year term with the CSC Board of Directors and serving on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Foreign Language Committee. Martie has contributed to professional publications, with the most recent contribution entitled "Chapter 8: Factors that Affect the Implementation of Standards" in *Teaching Spanish with the Five C's: A Blueprint for Success*, edited by Gail Guntermann. She has advocated on behalf of FLES at the local, state, and national levels. She was key to getting a bill passed to include foreign languages in the Colorado Standards-Based Education Act. Martie has a B.S. from the University of Dayton, Ohio, and an M.A. from Adams State College, Alamosa, Colorado. She has been honored with a 1995 Governor's Award for Excellence in Education, the 1995 ACTFL-NTC Award for Building Community Interest in Foreign Language Education, and as a 1998 Disney American Teacher Awards honoree.

In her nomination statement, Martie said, "It is truly an honor to be considered a candidate for Second Vice President of NNELL. NNELL leaders and members have been not only a resource, but also a source of inspiration for me throughout my endeavors on behalf of P–16 foreign language education. Two examples immediately come to mind: NNELL was a professional resource for me as I planned, implemented, coordinated, and eventually taught in a districtwide content-related K–5 Spanish program. And, NNELL strongly influenced me as the current Chair of the AATSP Public Advocacy Committee when I coordinated the development of the 1999 AATSP promotional video *Spanish & Portuguese in the Twenty-First Century*. It is long overdue that I give back to NNELL. I would welcome this NNELL leadership role in order to collaborate with members to advance NNELL's ultimate goal of quality long-sequence foreign language education for all students in grades P–8. In addition, I would welcome the opportunity to continue work with the New Visions in Foreign Language Education project. To the difficult issues raised during New Visions, I believe creative solutions are emerging and will continue to emerge from NNELL, as is evidenced by the many NNELL authors in the book *Critical Issues in Early Second Language Learning: Building for Our Children's Future*, edited by Myriam Met. Most important, it is time to collaborate with and to build coalitions with non-foreign language organizations in order to further NNELL's goals. I would welcome the challenge of continuing to expand NNELL's already effective advocacy efforts in our local, state, and national communities."

Marcia J. Pastorek

Marcia Pastorek is the Foreign Language Coordinator at Trinity Episcopal School in New Orleans, Louisiana, where she teaches French in grades 1–4. Her broad teaching experience extends from kindergarten to adults. She has directed a children's summer French immersion camp, has written and directed several children's French plays, and has published children's stories. Marcia is a regular presenter at state and regional conferences and is actively involved in the Louisiana Foreign Language Teachers Association. She has served NNELL for the past two years in the capacity of Treasurer and was nominated to run for a second term.

In her nomination statement, Marcia says, "Early language learning programs have been a special interest to me since I am a product of such a program myself. I think it is extremely important that in the 21st Century all children become part of high-quality foreign language programs. In our diverse, multicultural world, it is imperative that we strive to do so. NNELL's commitment to leadership, support, and service to early language learning attracted me to the organization. NNELL's vision is also my own personal vision. As a member of the Executive Board, I hope to assist NNELL in its continued efforts to promote opportunities for all children to be a part of quality early language programs."



Making tortillas in a restaurant in Izamal, Yucatan, June 1995. Photograph by Jeanette Borich, Spanish and French Teacher, Terrace Elementary School, Ankeny, Iowa. See also Jeanette's classroom activity in Activities for Your Classroom—Making Tortillas *on pages 20–21.*

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Outstanding German Educator Award and Checkpoint Charlie Foundation Scholarship

Phyllis Farrar, who was appointed Kansas representative to the National Network for Early Language Learning in 1999, received the Outstanding German Educator Award and Checkpoint Charlie Foundation Scholarship (K–8) from the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) at its annual meeting in Boston, Massachusetts. This award honors excellence in teaching, as evidenced by the individual's ability to stimulate and challenge students intellectually; and the teacher's professional growth and contributions, as evidenced by continued study, the ability to influence the quality of education in classrooms other than one's own, and contributions to the academic environment outside the classroom. Since 1999 the Checkpoint Charlie Foundation has supported this award with stipends for study-travel in Berlin.

Phyllis Farrar teaches German and photography at West Junior High School, Lawrence, Kansas. She is a lifetime member of the Kansas Foreign Language Association, where she was Treasurer from 1996–98 and is now Executive Secretary; a member of the Kansas Association of Teachers of German, where she has served as vice-president and program chair; Advisory Council member in the Central States Conference; and ACTFL member and member of the ACTFL Evaluation Committee (1999). In 1998 Phyllis received the German Teacher of the Year Award from the Kansas Association of German Teachers. In the same year, she received the Best of Kansas Award at the Kansas Foreign Language Association Spring Conference for her unit "Teaching the Holocaust," and this year was awarded a Max Kade Foundation scholarship for encouraging the study of German by young students.

But awards and titles tell only part of the story; Phyllis's colleagues and students fill in the blanks. She runs a student-centered classroom that is rich in German language and culture. Phyllis has compiled numerous units, which allow her students to build a base for life-long learning in art, history, and culture; connect their knowledge to their community through work on German immigration to Kansas; learn about World Cup soccer; and engage with issues of the Holocaust. She spearheaded an action to add a foreign language requirement to the curriculum for seventh graders and has been a mentor teacher for a Community Connections grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

When the Vienna Boys Choir came to Kansas, Phyllis arranged, after initial rejection of the idea by tour administrators, for her students to host the choirboys for a day of recreation. Her persistence led to an event that participants remember as a true high point in their schooling.

Phyllis is a team player and "a model of professionalism, dedication, creativity, organization, and tirelessness." NNELL is proud to join AATG in recognizing Phyllis Farrar as an Outstanding German Educator.

Congratulations to Phyllis Farrar!

— AATG

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Join the Conversation: Sign up for the Early Language Learning Listserv!

Do you want to feel more connected to your colleagues around the country? Ñandu* is an exciting listserv designed for educators interested in early foreign language learning. This listserv is sponsored by the Improving Foreign Language Instruction project of the Center for Applied Linguistics and the Northeast and Islands Regional Laboratory at Brown University. Ñandu participants discuss timely issues, provide resources for one another, and share experiences in early foreign language programs. Join now!

In order to subscribe to Ñandu, write an e-mail message to nandu-request@caltalk.cal.org. Do not write anything in the subject heading. In the message box write: SUBSCRIBE FIRSTNAME LASTNAME; then send the message.

Below is an example of correspondence that occurs on the listserv. Although the first entry is longer than most, it illustrates the important information that is shared—and the feedback received—on Ñandu. The first correspondent, Cherice Montgomery, was invited as an apprentice leader to the institute, which she describes here, to share her talent in creating thematic units. She wrote this message last summer on the Ñandu listserv and received 55 responses.

*Ñandu means *spider* in Guaraní, the indigenous language of Paraguay. Complementing the Ñandutí (spider's web) early foreign language learning Website at http://www.cal.org/earlylang, the listserv Ñandu brings the strands of language education together with spider-like agility.

Monday, August 7, 2000

I attended the institute "K–6 Foreign Languages: Leading the Way with Teacher Preparation" held at Iowa State University during this past week.

For those of you who are not familiar with it, this is a summer institute designed to enhance the skills of teacher educators, especially those who have little or no personal experience with elementary school students, and to enrich the professional knowledge and skills of practicing K–6 teachers.

It also encourages interaction between these two groups of people and provides all participants with an opportunity to observe a master K–6 teacher in action with a real class of beginning Kindergarten and first grade students.

I cannot begin to tell you what an incredibly worthwhile experience it was for me. The presenters (Helena Curtain and Carol Ann Pesola Dahlberg) addressed topics such as current K–6 program models; effective K–6 program design; standards-based, thematic curriculum development; effective teaching; authentic assessment; the use of technology in the classroom; and the teacher as researcher, among other things.

The discussions were stimulating and the demonstrations (mostly in German) reminded me of the many thoughts, feelings, and emotions that our second language learners experience as they attempt to negotiate meaning in a language that is entirely unfamiliar to them.

I think I had forgotten how much anxiety that experience can provoke, so it was especially helpful to me in identifying strategies and techniques that I can use to help my students be more successful.

Probably the most powerful part of the institute for me as a secondary teacher,

however, was having the opportunity to observe Rita Gullickson (the demonstration teacher) teaching Spanish to a class of Kindergarten and first grade students for one hour on weekdays.

Her teaching was thematic and standards-based. The children were nearly always actively engaged and participating, yet the most impressive part about it was that she did the entire program in 100% Spanish from the very beginning.

When the children came to class on the first day, she spoke to them for about 5 minutes in English, explained to them that everything would be in Spanish, and set up a little magical "transition" routine. The children turned around slowly three times as she marked the rhythm of the turns with taps on a tambourine. They counted together, "one, two, *TRES*." When they got to *tres* everything she said afterwards was in Spanish. When it was time for class to end, they did *"uno, dos*, THREE" and then she spoke to them in English again.

. . . I am convinced that teaching 100% in the language can not only be done—even at (or maybe especially at) the elementary level, but that it is the best way to teach.

The thing that was so impressive about it was that she really did keep her word. The children could speak to her in English, but she always answered them in Spanish.

As institute participants, we had the opportunity to watch the class and to discuss it after the children left each day. What was most powerful to me was to realize that in just seven hours, many of these children were speaking words, phrases, and even singing songs all by themselves and that they were doing it spontaneously!

After watching Rita in action, I am convinced that teaching 100% in the language can not only be done—even at (or maybe especially at) the elementary level, but that it is the best way to teach.

(I had always believed in it, but wasn't always sure that it was really as attainable a goal, especially with beginning students, as everyone who does it always claims.)

This experience has renewed my own personal enthusiasm and commitment to teaching in Spanish with my Level 1 high school classes next year.

If you have an opportunity to attend this K–6 Institute in the future, I can promise you that it will be a truly revolutionary experience. It certainly was for me!

— Cherice Montgomery
montgomery@feist.com
Wichita, Kansas

Monday, August 7, 2000

Cherice:

I worked with Carol Ann in Atlanta on August 1st and she was amazing. I am so glad to hear someone I really respect online talk about her conference that way. We have paid to have her come to Georgia for several years since 1992 and she and Helena have really been a blessing. I remember them telling me that it can be done and kinda halfway believing. Now in my 9th year I don't try to brag, but I am happy, very happy to be that teacher you described! It CAN be done and anyone else who wants it can have it too. You just have to do it ALL in the language.

I am forwarding your comments to them because they love to hear them. If you are interested in the curriculum that they helped develop in GA, thematic and content-standards based look on my site: http://www.misterspanishteacher.homestead.com.

Thanks for the GREAT post!

— Joe Pennington
joe_p@bellsouth.net
Atlanta, Georgia

Tuesday, August 8, 2000

In answer to (a listserv member's) question, yes, it is possible to do 40 minutes/week entirely in the target language. My students from our teaching program did just

that last year in grades K–2 at two of our local district's schools.

I too attended the Institute that Cherice wrote about. It was a superb learning experience. I highly recommend future institutes to all teachers.

— Eileen Zeitz
ezeitz@d.umn.edu
U. of Minnesota–Duluth

Tuesday, August 15, 2000

I am so glad to hear the discussion that is happening. Not to say that I am glad others are having problems, but I guess there is some comfort in knowing that others face the same challenges I do. I sometimes feel like it would take me longer to explain a project in Spanish than it would for the kids to actually do the project. Any suggestions?

— Susan Formento
saformento@worldnet.att.net
Chesterfield, Michigan

Friday, August 18, 2000

I am a true believer that the TL MUST be spoken during my entire class time. If you think of your students as babies/toddlers learning English, you will understand why it is so important to use the TL exclusively. When a baby is learning English, he/she listens. The parents model the language for them.

For example, if a parent asks a baby/toddler to do something, the baby/toddler may not know exactly what the parent is asking, however, if the parent models the directions/command for him/her, usually they will get it. Frustration comes naturally when learning a second language and for the baby/toddler. That frustration will turn into comprehension. The more a child listens to the TL, the more the child will comprehend. Remember, listening skills must be mastered before any speaking will take place; just like a baby/toddler.

I tend to have fun activities and games that are very, very simple. I speak the TL when giving directions, however, I have many, many visuals and I model the directions and make mistakes so that the student understands what I want. If a student states, "I don't get it"; this is good. He/she will get it eventually after the frustration wears off and the comprehension level increases. I teach 2nd and 3rd graders also and by October, they all know I only speak Spanish and THEY LOVE IT!!!! Routine also plays a huge role in the level of frustration. The more of a routine you have, the less frustration you will see.

I teach 2nd and 3rd graders also and by October, they all know I only speak Spanish and THEY LOVE IT!!!!

Hang in there!!!!

— Miriam Arminio
NICKMIRIAM@aol.com
Tom's River, New Jersey

Monday, August 21, 2000

That is so true!!! If we believe . . . anything can happen. In addition, if we support one another, we can make everything happen!!!!

Too many of the teachers think it won't work. But as U and I can attest. IT DOES WORK!!!!! Thanks for the encouragement. Keep up the good work!

— Tricia McCarthy
Michaeltricia@aol.com
Massapequa, New York

Making Tortillas

Jeanette Borich
Terrace Elementary
Ankeny, Iowa

Level: Spanish, Grades 1–4

This lesson is a follow-up to a lesson from *Teacher to Teacher: Model Lessons for K–8 Foreign Language* available from the National Textbook Company. It follows the retelling of a Mexican legend, *The Tale of Corn*. This lesson fits into a unit in which the children have studied bread, a product of their own culture. They have also been learning about their own state, Iowa, and one of its important products, corn.

Targeted Standards:

Communication

1.2 Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.

Cultures

2.2 Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.

Connections

3.1 Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.

Comparisons

4.2 Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

Communities

5.2 Students show evidence of becoming lifelong learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

Objectives:

1. Students will place in the correct order the steps for making a tortilla.
2. Students will understand the following statements:
   - *Pongo agua en la masa.* (I put water in the corn meal.)
   - *Mezclo la masa y el agua.* (I mix the corn meal and the water.)
   - *Formo una bola grande.* (I form a big ball.)
   - *Formo las bolas pequeñas.* (I form little balls.)
   - *Palmeo las tortillas* (I pat the tortillas flat.) While you pantomime this action, recite the tortilla poem given in Objective 3 below.
   - *Cocino las tortillas.* (I cook the tortillas.)
   - *¡Me gustan las tortillas! ¡Tengo hambre!* (I like tortillas! I am hungry!)
3. Students will use the following chant and poem to extend their understanding of the language:

   Chant:
   - *Me gustan mucho las tortillas.* (I like tortillas alot.)
   - *¿Tengo razón? ¿Qué sí? ¿Qué no?* (Am I right? Yes? No?)

   Poem:
   - *Tortillas, tortillas para mamá.* (Little tortillas for Mama.)
   - *Tortillas, tortillas para papá* (Little tortillas for Papa.)
   - *Tortillas, tortillas para María.* (Little tortillas for María.)

- *Tortillas, tortillas para* [someone in the class]. (Little tortillas for _____.)

Materials:

1. Painted, laminated flashcard-size visuals (from *A Teacher's Guide to a Quetzacoatl Tale of Corn*, 1992) for the seven steps in making a tortilla.
2. Corn meal for tortillas, available at most grocery stores.

Procedure:

Introduce the seven steps for making tortillas with a Gouin Series (Curtain & Pesola, 1994) by displaying the visual and pantomiming the action involved as you say each step. Next have the class pantomime the actions with you, first as a group and later as individuals, as you say the steps. Then encourage students to say the steps with you as you pantomime them.

When the students can pantomime and say the steps easily, teach them the chant, inserting a step in the tortilla-making process as the second line of the chant, for example:

Me gustan mucho las tortillas. (I like tortillas a lot.)
Mezclo la masa y el agua. (I mix the corn meal and the water.)
Tengo razón. ¿Qué sí? ¿Qué no? (I am right. Yes? No?)

Have students pantomime with you the step in line two of the chant as you say it. Then, as you recite the first and last lines of the chant, clap your hands to the rhythm and have students accompany you.

Next, when the students know the chant well, turn the chant into a game by having students check to see if you have pantomimed the step you are saying in the chant or a different one. If you have pantomimed the step correctly, in response to the question at the end of the chant, students will answer *¡Sí!* (Yes!); or, if not, students will say *¡No!* (No!) and will pantomime the correct action for the step. As students become proficient in this chanting game, have them take the role of the leader.

Evaluation:

Following your verbal instruction, students put together a small booklet of the visuals and then tell you, a classmate, or a family member how to make a tortilla.

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Parke, M., & Panik, S. (1992). *A teacher's guide to a Quetzacoatl tale of corn.* Carthage, IL: Fearon Teacher Aids.

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Classroom Resources

Spanish

Lozano, P. (1999). *Get Them Talking.* Houston, TX: Dolo Publications.

Available from Dolo Publications, 12800 Briar Forest Drive #23, Houston, TX 77077-2201; 281-493-4552 Fax: 281-679-9092; Web site: www.dololanguages.com; ISBN 0-9650980-7-9. Cost is $21.95, plus $3.50 for shipping and handling.

"The rhythms of language seep deep down into the bones and muscles of the speaker where they dwell quietly forever. . . ."

Get Them Talking is a great resource for teaching strategies and learning activities that motivate kids to use the target language in fun and engaging ways. Although the text is written in English so that the activities can be used in any language classroom, examples are often provided in French and Spanish. Many of the activities require students to have some language background, and suggestions are given to use the activities with younger students. The creative, clearly written, and often humorous descriptions and activity pages include suggestions for chanting, singing, and storytelling, as well as activities that use instruments and music and theatre games. Every activity includes a step-by-step description, plus notes and cautions about specific classroom applications and pitfalls. The following information gives you a sneak preview of the contents of the book, which contains many, many more fun activities for language learning.

Lozano begins the chanting section by giving the rationale for using chanting songs or poetry in the classroom. Chanting, she explains, gets the whole class on the "same enthusiastic wavelength" and students are not as inhibited by chanting as they might be by singing ("chanting is rap and rap is *cool*"). She cites brain research that speaks to the power of music for learning and retaining language ("The rhythms of language seep deep down into the bones and muscles of the speaker where they dwell quietly forever . . ."). Because chanting inherently includes repetition, "students become familiar and comfortable with vocal patterns and develop a smooth, flowing cadence in the target language." For those of us who are musically challenged, Lozano effectively explains how to ascertain if the beat of a song is written in 2/4 or 4/4 time ("marching" or "walking" songs). The steps for a basic chant include: 1) the teacher and the students establishing and keeping a steady beat with their fingers; 2) the teacher chanting the first four lines of the chant in rhythm; 3) keeping a steady beat, the students chanting the same lines with the teacher; and 4) chanting the remaining lyrics four lines at a time. Examples are included of many different types of chants including, *The Emotional Chant*, *Gesture Chanting*, *The Stompin' Grammar Chant*, *Nonsense Chanting*, and *Frog Chorus*.

The next section builds on the information about chanting and introduces "the magic of music and the power of singing." Ms. Lozano describes how music fits with all of our multiple intelligences. She also reminds us that "we learn by doing," as illustrated by the clapping, bouncing, marching, and role-playing that happen with singing, stressing that the students will remember the songs forever. She gives suggestions for using songs as tools for listening

comprehension, motivation, cultural understanding, self-expression, creativity, improvisation, drill and exercise, analysis, embellishment, and enjoyment. The many activities for using music in the language classroom include: The *White-out Disaster* (similar to a "cloze" song activity sheet with certain words/phrases whited-out but in this case, before listening to the song, pairs of students come up with possible words to fill in the blanks); *Crossover* (in which some of the lines are mixed up, such as, "Oh, give me a range where the buffalo roam . . . Where seldom is heard a discouraging play . . .", the students listen to the song, mark where the language is altered, find the correct word/phrase, and then sing the real song lyrics); and *Runner Dictation*, in groups of three to five, the students choose a reader, who reads song lyrics of poems or songs posted on the wall and relays as much as s/he can remember to the runner, a runner, who relays the words to the writer, and a writer, who writes out the song lyrics).

In the music section of the book Lozano writes, "Music without lyrics is pure sound and emotion that has the power to unleash the imagination, send the mind on new journeys and unlock the creative spirit hidden in all of us." She gives many strategies for using music without lyrics for background material, to reinforce the natural rhythms and accents found in a second language, as the focal point for class discussions, and to get students moving and talking. In an innovative "find someone" activity the students walk or march around the room when the rhythmic instrumental music starts, and when it stops they listen to your question and find someone who . . . has done something, has been somewhere, etc. In *Musical Impressions*, students listen to short cultural music pieces, draw on a piece of paper their impressions of how the music makes them feel, and write short descriptions of the illustration. The teacher then plays the music again and chooses several students to show and describe their illustrations or lets students show an illustration and the class guesses the corresponding musical selection.

The storytelling section includes tips for choosing stories that teach about the culture behind the language; that reinforce vocabulary and grammar; that show the universality of human experience; and that involve the listener in the storytelling. This involvement is accomplished using stick-figures, creating gestures or actions for specific vocabulary, sequencing the story with illustrations, remembering an event from the story, reciting it, and standing on a story continuum from beginning to end. Storytelling and story-reading tips include making eye contact often, lowering the lights, changing tone and varying the intensity of your voice, and pausing to portray suspense. There is also a section on creating original stories and using the skeleton of an existing story to create a new one. In *Change the Flavor* the students change the adjectives in a story summary you have prepared for them, thereby creating a new flavor. Students cut random pictures from magazines for a *Photo Story*. You then collect the pictures, shuffle them, and distribute 6–10 to each student. The students create booklets of pictures, which you collect and redistribute to different students. Each student now creates his or her own story and later shares it with the class.

Theater Games is the last section of this resource book. These games encompass role playing, "playacting," and creative drama. According to Lozano, they have myriad values for language learning, including exposing students to language in simulated real-life situations, giving students opportunities to infer the underlying meaning of a spoken text from context and body language, helping students develop inter- and intra-personal intelligences, building confidence before an audience, and using body language to assist students in retaining the lan-

"Music without lyrics is pure sound and emotion that has the power to unleash the imagination. . . ."

guage. In *Partner Greetings* you prepare "partner description cards" (a bookworm, long-lost friends, a hot-dog seller and a hungry customer with no money) for each pair of students. The pairs prepare mini-dialogues to present to the class and the class guesses who they represent. *Oh What a Nice Thing* is a nice change from Twenty Questions. In this activity you go around the classroom and whisper the name of an imaginary item in each student's ear (a slice of pizza, a smelly shoe, and an ice cube). The students take a moment to feel the object in their hands before you choose a student to answer questions about it, such as, Is it hard or soft? or What does it say? Other students guess the identity of the object. After several students have answered questions about their objects, you ask the class to deposit their objects carefully into the hands of the person sitting on their left and to whisper to her or him its name, and the activity continues.

Patti Lozano, an experienced and practicing language teacher, writes in a teacher-friendly style that relates her strategies to the classroom, as well as to theory of language learning. This book promises to provide a multitude of interesting and exciting language experiences for teachers and their students.

German

Tankel, L. (1996). *Sag, mir wie spät es ist!* Würzburg: Edition Bücherbär im Arena Verlag GmbH. (ISBN 3-401-07325-7).

Sag, mir wie spät es ist! is an excellent book to use for teaching the telling of time. In addition, it focuses on children's daily schedules, from getting up in the morning to going to bed in the evening. The pictures are colorful photographs of actual children in a multicultural society.

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Sidwell Friends, a coeducational, independent Quaker day school, seeks a full-time Spanish teacher for its Lower School in Bethesda, Maryland, grades PK–4, to begin a new program September 2001. Planning time to develop the program will be provided in the Spring of 2001. Position requires extensive expertise in teaching Spanish to young children and in designing curriculum. Elementary classroom experience highly desirable, as well as a gentle spirit and appreciation of the developmental differences among young children. Native speaker preferred. The position will entail working closely and cooperatively with teachers.

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Calendar

Spring 2001 Conferences

March 8–10, 2001
Southern Conference on Language Teaching. Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Lynne McClendon, SCOLT Executive Director, 165 Lazy Laurel Chase, Roswell, GA 30076; 770-992-1256; Fax: 770-992-3464; E-mail: lynnemcc@mindspring.com.

March 15–17, 2001
Southwest Conference on Language Teaching. Burlingame, California. SWCOLT, 10932 W. Puget Ave., Peoria, AZ 85345.

March 29–April 1, 2001
Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. New York, New York. Northeast Conference, Dickinson College, P.O. Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013-2896; 717-245-1977; Fax: 717-245-1976; E-mail: nectfl@dickinson; Web site: www.dickinson.edu/nectfl.

April 26–28, 2001
Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Indianapolis, Indiana. Diane Ging, Executive Director, CSC, PO Box 21531, Columbus, OH 43221-0531; 614-529-0109; Fax: 614-529-0321; E-mail: dging@iwaynet.net.

Summer 2001 Courses and Workshops

June 17–July 13, 2001
Teacher Preparation for Elementary and Middle School Foreign Languages. Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota. Carol Ann Pesola Dahlberg, Concordia College, Moorhead, MN 56562; 218-299-4511; E-mail: cadahlbe@cord.edu.

June 24–28, 2001
National FLES* Institute. University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Maryland. Dr. Gladys C. Lipton, 301-231-0824; Fax 301-230-2652; E-mail: lipton@umbc2.umbc.edu; Web site: http://homepages.go.com/~gladys_c_lipton.

July 16–25, 2001
Teaching Foreign Languages to Young Students. Mari Haas, 212-865-5382; E-mail: hassmarib@aol.com. Registration: The Center for Educational Outreach and Innovation, Teachers College, 525 W. 120th St., Box 132, New York, NY 10027-6696; 212-678-3987.

July 16–26, 2001
K–8 Foreign Languages: Leading the Way with Teacher Preparation. Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey; Marcia Harmon Rosenbusch, National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center, N131 Lagomarcino Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; 515-294-6699; Fax: 515-294-2776; E-mail: nflrc@iastate.edu; Web site: www.educ. iastate.edu/nflrc.

August 8–16, 2001
New Technologies in the Foreign Language Classroom for Methods Professors. Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. Marcia Harmon Rosenbusch, National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center, N131 Lagomarcino Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; 515-294-6699; Fax: 515-294-2776; E-mail: nflrc@iastate.edu; Web site: www.educ.iastate.edu/nflrc.

★ ★

The ACTFL/FDP-Houghton Mifflin Award for Excellence in Foreign Language Instruction Using Technology with IALL

Dr. Jean LeLoup, SUNY at Cortland, Cortland, New York, and Teaching with Technology Contributing Editor for *Learning Languages*, is truly an innovator and practitioner. She is a very well-known advocate of the effective role that technology can play in foreign language instruction through her publications, presentations and workshops presented throughout the United States.

New technologies and the easy availability of online resources are changing the ways modern languages and culture are taught. Jean LeLoup is at the forefront of this exciting revolution. As a strong advocate of technology and its productive use in foreign language, she, along with her colleague, Robert Ponterio, co-founded and are the moderators for FLTEACH, a nationwide listserv and international forum for foreign language educators. Since 1993 she has dedicated much professional and personal time to the development, maintenance, and expansion of this excellent resource for our profession.

Jean LeLoup is the quintessential professional: knowledgeable, energetic, inspiring, and always excited to learn more. She is truly a gifted instructor. She is extremely well organized, innovative in her approach, and skillful at grounding her pedagogical lectures in theory, while not losing sight of the practicality of day-to-day instruction. She makes technology real to the students—giving practical explanations and always stressing the point that we can make technology work for us as we lead students through the language acquisition process. An important aspect of her teaching to practicing foreign language teachers is that she is also tuned in to their plight, aware of both their capabilities and limitations when it comes to implementing lessons. She is tireless in her efforts, giving hours to students as they explore the tangled web of teaching in the 21st century.

Dr. LeLoup's students identify her as "the most professional, accomplished and caring professor" they have had throughout their careers in Cortland, and the professor they choose as their "role model." They speak of "the incredible atmosphere of respect" she creates in her classes, along with the "comfortable atmosphere of the class" that "allowed them to learn and think critically."

Jean LeLoup is truly a role model—for undergraduates, graduates, and colleagues. Her enthusiasm toward her profession and her warmth toward those she works with are contagious. She has made a difference in the lives of thousands of foreign language professionals. She is one of the forerunners of the integration of technology in foreign language teaching, and this award is most appropriate to honor and recognize her accomplishments.

Congratulations to Jean LeLoup!

— Elizabeth Hoffman

★ ★

ERIC DIGEST EDO-FL-00-04 SEPTEMBER 2000

Thematic, Communicative Language Teaching in the K–8 Classroom

MARI HAAS, TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Foreign language instruction for children can be enriched when teachers use thematic units that focus on content-area information, engage students in activities in which they must think critically, and provide opportunities for students to use the target language in meaningful contexts and in new and complex ways. The national standards for foreign language teaching and learning support this approach to language instruction (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996).

According to the standards, when teachers plan lessons they should focus on the five Cs of Communication, Culture, Connections with other disciplines, Comparisons with students' native languages and cultures, and use of the foreign language in Communities outside the classroom. Increasingly, foreign language educators are integrating the five Cs of the standards into "content-related" (Curtain & Pesola, 1994) or "theme-based" (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992) curricula. These curricula reinforce or extend the content of the regular classroom curriculum to give coherence to the language lessons. A unit on the solar system, for example, might include vocabulary that describes the attributes of the planets, which students are also learning about in English. Students might also listen to and recite a poem about the moon and the stars, compare the view of the "rabbit in the moon" found in Aztec and Asian cultures to the North American view of the "man in the moon," observe the night sky (phases of the moon and star constellations) in their area at different times of the year, and compare their observations with those of students in other parts of the world through email exchanges in the target language.

Planning Thematic Units

Themes for curriculum units can be derived from many sources. Planning thematic units allows the teacher to incorporate a variety of language concepts into a topic area that is interesting and worthy of study and that gives students a reason to use the language. Teachers should choose themes that lend themselves to teaching language that will be useful for their students. Themes and lessons should integrate language, content, and culture into activities that allow students to practice the foreign language and that prepare them to use it in a variety of contexts. A focus on communication, including the interactions present in all uses of the language (for speaking, listening, reading, and writing) is essential. Students need to be able to interpret the language, express themselves in the language, and negotiate meaning in the language (Savignon, 1997).

In beginning communicative language classes, the teacher's role includes introducing vocabulary and phrases and providing comprehensible language input for the students. Visuals and manipulatives, gestures, sounds, and actions all help students understand the new vocabulary and structures. Students need opportunities to be active participants in tasks that require them to negotiate meaning and practice language in communication with their teacher, their peers, and others.

Pesola (1995) developed the Framework for Curriculum Development for FLES programs, which begins with a thematic center and creates a dynamic relationship among the factors that teachers must take into account: language in use, subject content, and culture. (See also Curtain & Pesola, 1994, for a detailed description of the framework.) The framework highlights a set of questions to guide curriculum planning:

- Who are the students in terms of learner characteristics, such as developmental level, learning style, and experiential background?
- What are the planned activities, and how will teachers assess students' performance?
- How will the classroom setting affect the planned activities?
- What materials do teachers need to support the activities?
- What language functions, vocabulary, and grammatical structures will students practice through the activities?
- What knowledge about subject content and culture will the students gain?

Examples of Thematic Units

Three thematic units—Visiting the Farm, A German Fairy Tale, and The South American Rainforest—are described below. They were developed by teachers who used Pesola's framework to guide their planning process. In each of these units, the teachers created language immersion settings in their classrooms, planned lessons around themes that were interesting to the students, asked the students to think critically, reinforced concepts and skills from the regular classroom, integrated culture, and gave students many opportunities to use the target language in a variety of situations (Haas, 1999).

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Visiting the Farm

Martine's second-grade French class focused on the farm for 4 weeks. The class began each day with an activity that reviewed previously learned language. For example, one student would make an animal sound and call on another student to say the name of the animal. As the students moved from activity to activity, Martine gave them short time limits for specific tasks to be completed on their own or in pairs or small groups. The students used French as they manipulated pictures and completed assigned tasks. Activities included brainstorming a list of names of farm animals in French that students already knew, learning new animal names in French, and drawing a farm mural on butcher paper; singing a song about animals in the barnyard (*Dans la basse cour*); comparing barns in France and the United States; planting two types of vegetables chosen from seed packets of common French vegetables; measuring and charting the plants' growth; tasting radishes with butter (as they are served in France); creating a labeled farm page for their book of all of the places they "visited" in class that year; sorting food by plant or animal and completing and describing a food pyramid; making baguette sandwiches; comparing with a partner pictures of vocabulary words (e.g., the animals on their farm pages, their

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favorite foods, the ingredients in their baguette sandwiches) with a partner; listening to the story of the three pigs in French and creating their own versions of the tale (e.g., the three horses and the big, bad, hungry cow), which they acted out; and taking their baguette sandwiches with them to a fantasy picnic on the farm.

A German Fairy Tale

In this 3-week unit, Frederike introduced her third-grade German students to a story based on a Grimm's fairy tale about a pancake (*Pfannkuchen*) by singing the song *"Ich Habe Hunger"* ("I Am Hungry") with them, then preparing batter (measuring in grams) and cooking a pancake in class. Next, pairs of students compared the sentences they had cut apart from mixed-up copies of the recipe and resequenced them in the appropriate order. Throughout the unit, Frederike began each class by telling or retelling part of the pancake story. "The Thick, Fat Pancake" (*"Der Dicke Fette Pfannkuchen"*) is the story of an old woman who bakes a pancake that does not want to be eaten. It jumps out of the pan and rolls through the forest. The pancake's delicious smell attracts one forest animal after another. The names of the animals describe their characteristics, such as Wolf Sharptooth (*Wolf Scharfzahn*) and Rabbit Longears (*Haselongohr*). As the animals tell the pancake to stand still so that they can eat it, each one adds another adjective to describe the pancake: "Thick, fat, dear, sweet, yummy, wonderful, golden, delicious, marvelous pancake, stand still! I want to eat you up!" At this request, the pancake laughs and waves and continues rolling down the hill. Finally, the pancake meets two hungry orphans, jumps into their laps and begs, "Eat me, I will give you strength." The orphans then eat the pancake.

The students practiced new vocabulary by drawing pictures on the board as Frederike recited the scene and by sequencing sentences about the story using sentence strips and a pocket chart. The retellings were never boring and always included student input and probing questions that elicited information about the animals in the fairy tale. With each storytelling, Frederike emphasized different vocabulary or introduced a new animal. She also engaged the students in activities that provided practice in using German:

- copying sentences from the story and illustrating them to create personal storybooks
- listing characteristics of the animals, such as the large, sharp teeth of the wolf
- creating surnames for the animals, like Wolf Sharptooth
- playing "inside outside circles" (Kagan, 1986), with one circle of students asking questions about the story and their partners in the other circle answering
- pretending to become animals and pancakes when the teacher waved her magic wand, then role playing their actions in the story
- singing and dancing the "duck dance" and learning the parts of the animals' bodies
- listing what the animals ate and learning the German words for carnivore, herbivore, and omnivore
- practicing reading the fairy tale to a partner
- selecting roles for a play based on the fairy tale and presenting the play for their parents and the first-grade German students
- reading their illustrated storybooks to the first graders.

The South American Rainforest

"¿Necesitamos los portafolios de español?" (Do we need our Spanish notebooks?) is one of the questions students ask as they prepare for Soledad's fifth-grade Spanish class. Soledad begins the first class of this 6-week unit on the rainforest with a song about the weather and questions about the weather outside. Soon the class is working with maps, first with Soledad asking questions about the location of various rain forests in the world, then with the students in the role of teacher, asking other students questions.

The activities that follow lead students to communicate with each other, practice their Spanish, and focus on vocabulary and structure: locating rainforests on the map using their background knowledge from social studies class; contributing to a written description of rainforests on the overhead projector; reading chorally what they have written; and playing games and singing songs that practice the names of animals and their movements. They also work in small groups to tell each other how to color the different animals, to create sentences about animal pictures, to introduce themselves as an animal to their neighbors, to create a dialog between two animals, to write their animal dialogs on chart paper and to read and role-play them, and to edit the dialogs that they have written. They learn about the layers of the rainforest and where each animal lives, what they eat, and what their body coverings are. They write and record conversations between two animals that incorporate all of the information covered in class. They create the sounds of the rain in the rainforest through claps, snaps, and pounding feet. They write a paragraph about the rainforest and, finally, they make *batidos de mango* (mango shakes).

Conclusion

Although each class is different from the others in content and specific activities, all of the teachers planned interesting thematic units that included daily review of language; rich, comprehensible input in an immersion setting; and opportunities to think critically and to process language and negotiate meaning. They also involved students as active and interactive participants in a variety of activities that reflect the goals of the national standards. Although creating thematic units takes time and effort on the part of the teacher, this way of teaching engages students and provides them with a meaningful and exciting context in which to learn a new language.

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8. The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of ED, OERI, or NLE.

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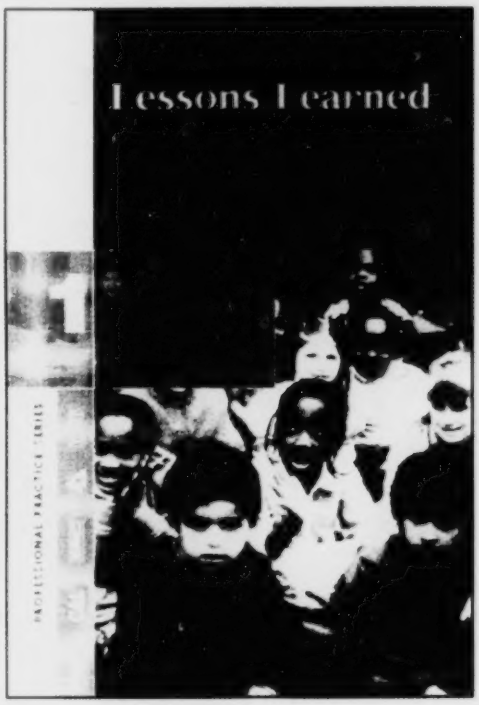

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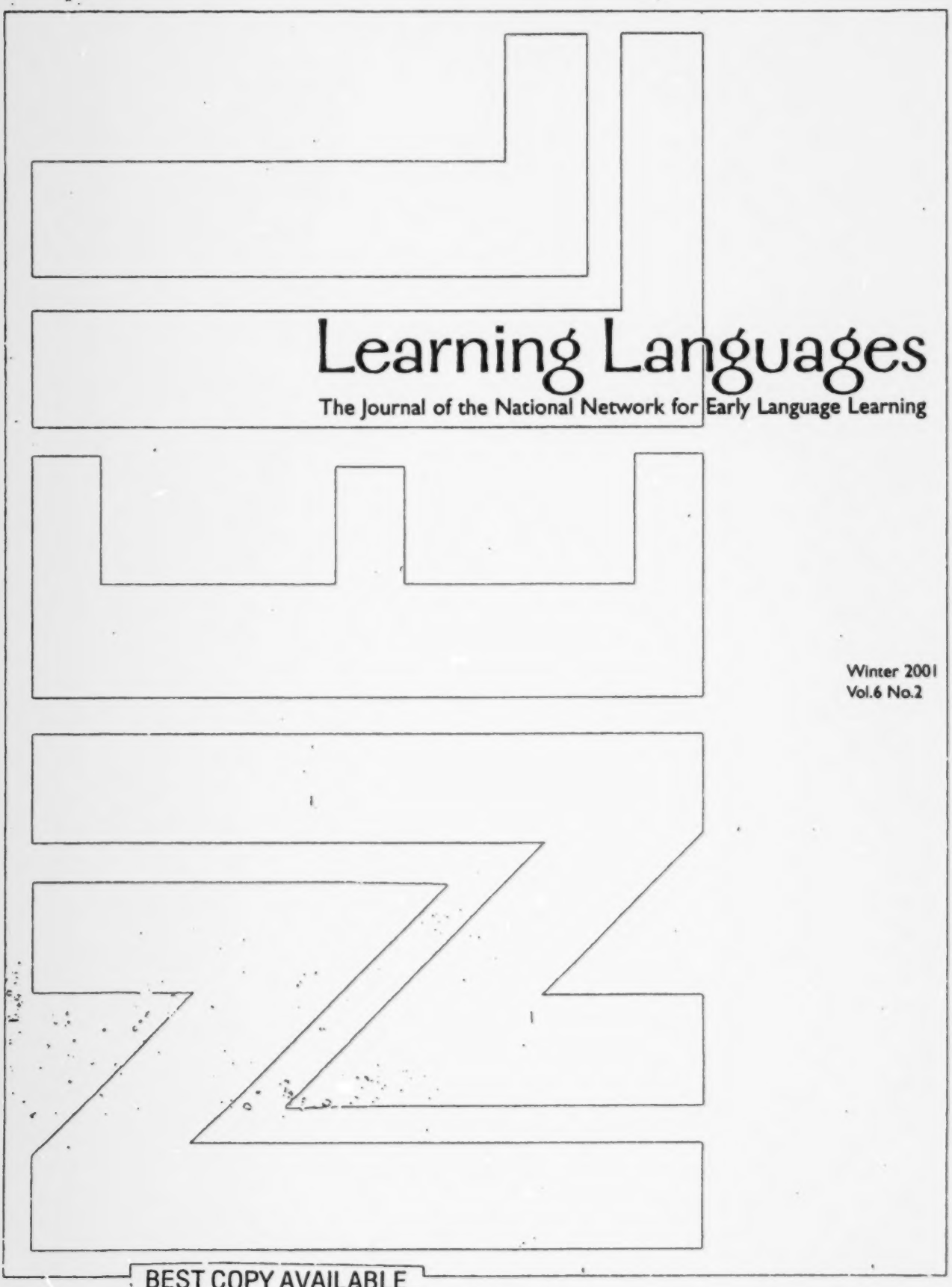

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Articles Published: Both practical and scholarly articles are published. Practical articles describe innovative approaches to teaching and the administration of effective language programs for children. Scholarly articles report on original research and cite both current research and theory as a basis for making recommendations for practice. Scholarly articles are refereed, i.e., reviewed anonymously by at least three readers. Readers include members of the NNELL executive board, the editorial advisory board, and invited guest reviewers who have expertise in the area. Refereed articles are identified as such in the journal. Write to the Editor to request a copy of author guidelines for preparing articles, or retrieve them from NNELL's Web site (www.educ.iastate.edu/nnell).

Submissions: Deadlines are: Fall issue—May 1; Winter issue—Nov. 1; Spring issue—Feb. 1. Articles, classroom activities, and materials may be submitted to the appropriate Contributing Editor. Send announcements, conference information, and original children's work (such as line drawings, short stories, and poems) to the Editor. Children's work needs to be accompanied by written permission from the child's parent or guardian and must include the child's name, age, school, and the teacher's name, address, and telephone (add fax and e-mail address, if available). Submit a favorite classroom activity for the "Activities for Your Classroom" section by sending a description of the activity that includes title, context, objectives, targeted standards, materials, procedure, and assessment. Include pictures or drawings as illustration, if available. Send with your name, address, and phone number to the Classroom Activities Editor.

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Learning Languages (ISSN 1083-5415) is published three times a year (fall, winter, and spring). Membership dues for NNELL, which include a subscription to the journal by academic year, are $25/year ($30 overseas). Please send your check to: Nancy Rhodes, Executive Secretary, NNELL, Center for Applied Linguistics, 4646 40th St. N.W., Washington, DC 20016-1859. Copyright © 2001 by the National Network for Early Language Learning.

Notes from the President

Dear NNELL Members,

Winter greetings for 2001 to all! Whether the second or first year of the new millennium, we should all approach 2001 with optimism and determination.

Let's not forget assertiveness in reaching our shared goals of every child learning a second language in a long and strong foreign language program beginning in the early years. We have made good progress but we must persevere and stay the course. We heard much during the recent presidential campaign about not leaving any child behind. Our challenge now is to work to realize this goal in the area of early foreign language learning. Former Secretary Richard W. Riley of the Department of Education was a strong advocate for foreign language as part of the general curriculum for all students. We look forward to working with Secretary Rod Paige to continue this forward momentum.

How to succeed is the question. The answers for me are advocacy and collaboration. And the good news is that NNELL members already do both. The Web site (www. languagepolicy. org) of the Joint National Committee for Languages–NationalCouncil for Languages and International Studies not only has excellent suggestions on advocacy in general, but it also alerts us that, as NNELL members, we need to take action to preserve the Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP). It provides us with sample letters we can send to our senators and representatives. If you are not familiar with it, FLAP is federal funding that is critical to the continued expansion and enhancement of early language programs across the nation. (See the related article on FLAP in this issue of *Learning Languages*.)

Collaboration is another key to our success. We all belong to a long list of professional organizations, both foreign language specific and more general. We also belong to community and civic groups. As we write our checks for dues to these organizations, we should think about how these colleagues might collaborate with us in our advocacy mission. And, of course, our thoughts should lead us to action.

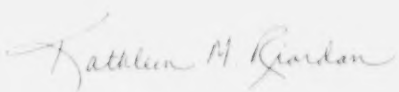
All NNELL members should read the winter 2000 issue of Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's (ASCD) *Curriculum Technology Quarterly* (Vol. 10, No. 2) because the *entire* issue is dedicated to foreign language education. The focus is on the integration of technology into foreign language learning. In addition to highlighting several outstanding foreign language/technology activities, the publication includes a Viewpoint Question/Answer piece with Paul Garcia, 2000 American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) president. Kudos to Paul, a NNELL member of course, for his answer to the question on new trends in foreign language education. Paul identified "the most important trend" as the continuing growth of language programs for "all" students in the elementary level. Of course, we NNELL members love to hear this. But the most important thing is that the ASCD publications go beyond a foreign language audience. Superin-

tendents, assistant superintendents, curriculum directors, principals, assistant principals, and teachers at all grade levels in all subject areas are ASCD's audience. This is a powerful example of advocacy and collaboration. Our thanks to Paul for the right message to a broad audience.

More good news! Christine Brown, NNELL charter member and 1999 president, is the president-elect of ACTFL. Christine will serve as ACTFL president in 2002. Congratulations from all of us! We look forward to an ongoing dialogue and collaboration with ACTFL on early language learning issues. Another powerful example of the potential of collaboration.

Building on the success of the NNELL events at ACTFL 2000 in Boston, the executive committee and regional representatives are planning a quality program for ACTFL 2001 in Washington DC. We look forward to even more attendance at the NNELL sessions and activities, as well as at the early language sessions.

Our best wishes to all for a healthy 2001, a year of ongoing advocacy and collaboration.



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What Teachers Need to Know about Language: ERIC/CLL Special Project

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics (ERIC/CLL) has published on its Web site a paper entitled "What Teachers Need to Know about Language," by Lily Wong Fillmore and Catherine E. Snow. Preparation of the paper was funded by the America Reads Challenge, a U.S. Department of Education initiative, as a special project to ERIC/CLL.

"What Teachers Need to Know about Language" describes the information teachers need about language and how they can use that knowledge to support language and literacy development in their classes. The paper is available at http://www.cal.org/ericcll/teachers/teachers.pdf. Other ERIC/CLL publications arising from this special project are listed at http://www.cal.org/ericcll/teachers. They include a commentary on the paper's implications for early childhood educators by Sue Bredekamp of the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition at http://www.cal.org/ericcll/teachers/commentary.pdf. Also included are three ERIC digests:

- What Elementary Teachers Need to Know about Language: ERIC Digest http://www.cal.org/ericcll/digest/0006fillmore.html
- What Early Childhood Teachers Need to Know about Language: ERIC Digest http://www.cal.org/ericcll/digest/0007bredekamp.html
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Foreign Language Teaching: What We Can Learn from Other Countries

Refereed Article

Ingrid U. Pufahl, Nancy C. Rhodes, and Donna Christian
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Introduction

It is well known in the United States that we have not kept up with the rest of the world in providing quality foreign language instruction to our students. During the last two decades, numerous reports and articles have decried the mediocrity of our students' foreign language skills and have called for improved language education (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999; Rosenbusch, 1995; Tucker, 1991). In his testimony before the Senate Government Affairs Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation and Federal Services on *The State of Foreign Language Capabilities in National Security and the Federal Government* (September 19, 2000), Secretary of Education Richard Riley stated that strengthening foreign language instruction in the nation will build a better workforce, ensure national security, and improve other areas of education.

. . . international comparisons offer much to leaders concerned with the improvement of schooling in the United States.

In this spirit, a working group at the U.S. Department of Education was formed to promote and encourage the dissemination of case studies and up-to-date information on best practices (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Their efforts are based on the premise that international comparisons offer much to leaders concerned with the improvement of schooling in the United States. Foreign language education was identified as a policy priority for the United States.

The Center for Applied Linguistics was asked by the U.S. Department of Education to explore what can be learned about language education around the world by 1) reviewing comparative language education studies, and 2) conducting interviews with language education professionals in countries whose policies and practices may inform those of the United States. The overall goal of the literature review and interviews was to look for methodologies, strategies, or policies that could help improve language teaching in this country.

To address this goal, we undertook a small-scale, 3-month exploratory study to collect information on interesting and illuminating features of foreign language education in various countries. Because of its limited scope, the study's goal was to include approximately 20 countries. We identified the countries based on whether they had educational systems similar to ours from which we could learn and whether we had contacts there with local educators. Initial contacts were made with 44 educators. As of the cutoff date for inclusion in the sample, we had received information from 19 countries. The information collected from each country was intended to be a snapshot of foreign language teaching as presented by one or two educators; it does not represent an official or comprehensive response. Hence, the data collected from each country was

qualitative; the study was not designed to be empirical or to collect quantitative data.

Twenty-three educators from the following 19 countries participated in the study: Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Israel, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, Spain, and Thailand. Additional information on China, England, and Hong Kong was gathered from published comparative language education reports. The comparative language education studies reviewed include Dickson & Cumming, eds., 1996; Hamp-Lyons, Hood, Sengupta, Curtis, & Yan, 1999; National Institute for Educational Research, 1994; and Nuffield Languages Inquiry, 2000.

This article summarizes the report that was prepared. For a comprehensive version of the report, including a summary of other comparative language education studies, complete results, the list of educators contacted, and a sample protocol, see http://www.cal.org/ericcll/countries.html.

Background. This project was carried out by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. CAL collaborated on this study with Alister Cumming, Head of the Modern Language Centre (MLC) at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto, Canada. The MLC, an internationally known center that conducts research in language education, has been involved in many international language studies, including the *Language Education Study* of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) that was used as a framework for the present study (Dickson & Cumming, eds., 1996). Other language education experts consulted on this project were G. Richard Tucker of Carnegie Mellon University and Nadine Dutcher of the World Bank (retired).

Methods. The first task of the project was to identify language professionals in countries whose language education practices could inform those in the United States. Working with the IEA study's list of contacts, along with recommendations from scholars at OISE and the project consultants, we identified a number of such language professionals. From the 44 educators contacted, we obtained responses from 23 experts representing 19 countries.

Our second task was to draft a protocol on best practices to guide the interviews. The major parameters for our interviews were to 1) focus on successful policies and pedagogical principles; 2) include open-ended questions, for example, "Describe what works best in the language programs in your country;" 3) explore practices related to both commonly taught and less commonly taught languages; and 4) include questions that address some of the five focus areas identified at the June 2000 New Visions Conference—architecture of the profession, curriculum, research, teacher recruitment, and teacher development. (The New Visions conference was sponsored jointly by the Iowa State University National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages).

Next, the data were gathered via this protocol, either by e-mail or telephone interview. Educators from countries that had participated in the IEA study were also asked to update the descriptions of the language policy in their countries from the 1996 report.

The final and most challenging task entailed compiling the data and examining the responses for common elements that could inform U.S. policy and practice. Certain threads ran through many of the countries' responses. Naturally, it is important to keep in mind the unique sociolinguistic

. . . there is a trend among all countries toward introducing foreign languages at earlier ages than before.

contexts for language use and instruction in each of the countries, including the profile of linguistic diversity within the country, the influence of neighboring countries with different languages in use, and the international status of the major societal languages. In response to the key question, "What do you think are three of the most successful aspects of foreign language education in your country?", we identified eight exemplary characteristics, six of which are described below. (The other two, technology and assessment, are described in the complete report.)

Overview of This Article. In the next section, "What Works in Other Countries," we present a summary of the results according to the major characteristics identified, so that comparisons can be made between countries where appropriate. These are the six characteristics: an early start; a well-articulated framework; rigorous teacher education; innovative methodologies; strong policy; and maintenance of heritage, regional, and indigenous languages.

In the final section, "What the United States Can Learn from This," we highlight what American educators can learn from these countries and we present nine recommendations that will help the foreign language profession address global educational concerns in the 21st century.

The article concludes with strong recommendations for U.S. educators to be more open to ideas from other countries and to become more involved in international collaboration in language teaching efforts.

What Works in Other Countries

An Early Start. Eight of our contributors, particularly those from European countries, identified an early start to foreign language learning as an important step toward achieving higher levels of language proficiency in multiple languages. Moreover, there is a trend among all countries toward introducing foreign languages at earlier ages than before.

Table 1 summarizes the students' ages when the first foreign language is introduced to the majority of students. Of the 19 countries consulted, 10 have widespread or compulsory education in additional languages by third grade (age 8 or 9), while another 6 introduce foreign language in the upper elementary grades (by age 11 or 12). In many cases, a second foreign language is offered (or required) in the elementary grades. This contrasts starkly with the current situation in the United States, where, although there have been major increases in the number of early language programs, the majority of students do not start studying foreign language until age 14.

As an example, consider Luxembourg, a multilingual country where proficiency in at least three languages is expected. During one year of optional preschool education, 4-year-olds who do not speak Luxembourgish learn the language through immersion in everyday tasks and play. The same approach, augmented by explicit teaching in small groups, is adopted in 2 years of compulsory preschool education for 5- and 6-year-olds. Literacy is introduced in first grade to all children through the German language. In second grade, children are introduced to spoken French, and in third grade, written French is added to the curriculum. In most cases, German and French are formally taught on an oral and written basis throughout grades 3 to 6, with Luxembourgish remaining a vehicle for communication and interaction. Just 1 hour a week is devoted to oral Luxembourgish, while an average of 6 to 8 hours per week is devoted to the teaching of German and French (ages 7 to 12).

A Well-articulated Framework. Seven contributors noted the importance of a well-articulated curriculum framework that motivates and guides the development of a strategic, coher-

Table 1. Foreign Languages Offered and Age of Introduction

Country	1st Foreign Language	Starting Age	Compulsory*	Widely Available	Additional Foreign Languages
Australia	French	6		X	German, Greek, Italian, Japanese
Austria	English	6	2X#		French, Italian
Brazil	English	11	X		Spanish, French, German
Canada	French	10	X		German, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Punjabi
Chile	English	> 12		X	French, German, Italian
Czech Republic	English and German	9	2X		French, Russian, Spanish
Denmark	English	10	2X		German, French, Spanish
Finland	English or other	9	2X		Swedish, Finish, German, French, Russian, Spanish, Italian
Germany	English or other	8	2X#		French, Spanish, Russian, Italian, Turkish
Israel	English	10	X		Hebrew, French, Arabic
Italy	English	8	X		French, German, Spanish, Russian
Kazakhstan	English	10	X		German, French
Luxembourg	German and French	6 and 7	2X		English, Italian, Spanish
Morocco	French	9	2X		English, Spanish, German
Netherlands	English	10	3X#		German, French
New Zealand	French	> 12			Japanese, Maori, German, Spanish
Peru	English	> 12	?		French, German
Spain	English	8	X		French, German, Italian, Portuguese
Thailand	English	6	X		French, German, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic
United States	Spanish	14		X	French, German, Japanese

* 2X or 3X means that two or three languages are compulsory. # = number of compulsory languages depends on school type and may be fewer than indicated.

ent, and transparent system of foreign language education in their respective countries. Although such frameworks may exist at the international (as in the Council of Europe) and/or national levels and may differ to the extent of their specificity, they bring consistency and coherence to language education as they coordinate the efforts of the organizations and initiatives involved in the various sectors and stages of education (Nuffield Languages Inquiry, 2000, p. 84).

Most European countries have already adapted their foreign language learning and teaching at the national level to the overall frameworks and standards articulated by the Council of Europe's language policy and will continue to do so in the future (Council of Europe, 1996).

In Australia one of the most influential projects undertaken nationally was the Australian Language Levels (ALL) Project (Scarino et al., 1988). This national generic framework influenced further major national curriculum development, particularly in Asian languages, and subsequently provided a framework for collaborative syllabus development and a common exit assessment from senior secondary schooling.

Rigorous Teacher Education. As in all areas of education, well-trained teaching professionals were cited as important contributors to excellence in foreign language education.

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Six educators from European countries as well as Morocco described how rigorous pre-service training that integrates academic subject studies with pedagogical studies and teaching practice is one of the most successful aspects of foreign language education in their respective countries.

In Morocco English teachers constitute one of the best-trained corps of teachers in the country. After a four-year degree in English from a university or teacher training college (with one year of specialization in either literature or linguistics), students spend a year studying language teaching methodology and getting practical training at the Faculty of Education. The majority of the English faculty in universities and teacher training colleges hold doctoral or master-level degrees from British or American universities.

In both the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, the high levels of language proficiency of foreign language teachers are specifically related to study (or work) abroad programs. In the United Kingdom almost all full-time students in specialist language degree programs spend a year studying or working abroad as part of their degree requirements. In addition, the Foreign Language Assistants program enables schools to appoint higher education students from other countries as classroom aides and living exponents of their language (Nuffield Languages Inquiry, 2000, p. 38 and p. 90).

In addition to pre-service training, in-service training for foreign language teachers was considered one of the keys to success in several countries. Specifically, experts from five European countries and Thailand reported that teachers' awareness of additional training and participation in courses, seminars, and conferences is very high, and that most countries have an elaborate system of in-service training in place (for details on Europe, see Eurydice, 1995).

Innovative Methodologies. Ten of our contributors singled out innovative methodologies and methods as key contributors to successful language instruction. Two of the methodologies are integrating language and content learning and incorporating language learning strategies.

1. Integrating Language and Content Learning. Learning academic or other subjects through the medium of a foreign language has become increasingly popular in many of the responding countries. Two ways of integrating language and content learning can be

identified that differ with respect to their underlying goals and concepts, their student populations, the status of the respective languages being used, and their organization and implementation. The programs in the corresponding countries can be subsumed under Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and immersion programs.

In CLIL, a foreign language is used as the medium of instruction in non-language subjects, frequently at the secondary school level, once students have acquired sufficient proficiency in the foreign language. For example, in Finland, CLIL in English spread rather quickly as a means of improving language proficiency following the recommendations of a national working party in 1990. A survey in 1996 showed that 5% of lower-stage schools (grades 1–6), 15% of upper-stage schools (grades 7–9), and 25% of upper secondary schools (grades 10–12) had CLIL in some form, ranging from a rather limited exposure (a short course or a dozen lessons) to a considerable part of the curriculum (Takala, Marsh, & Kikula, 1998).

In immersion programs or "bilingual programs" in Europe, usually primary school children are taught the subject matter exclusively, or to a large part, in a second or foreign language.

In Canada over the past three decades, one of the most successful and widely researched practices is immersion education, mainly for the English-speaking majority learning French (see Genesee, 1987; Swain & Johnson, 1997; Turnbull & Lapkin, eds., 1999).

In Germany and Australia many schools offer two-way immersion; that is, half the students are German or English speaking, respectively, and the other half are native speakers of the foreign language. The school day is spent with half the instruction in the respective mother tongue, the other in the foreign (or second) language. Berlin, for example, has 14 elementary schools, with instruction in German and English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Polish, Russian, Modern Greek, or Turkish, respectively.

2. Incorporating Language Learning Strategies. Several of our European experts reported that the recent focus on how to learn a foreign language and its incorporation into the curriculum has contributed to successful language education in their countries. Thus, in the Netherlands, learners are increasingly asked to reflect on, and become more responsible for, their own language learning. In Denmark the curriculum for the *Folkeskole* (grades 1–10) not only specifies certain central knowledge and proficiency areas for foreign language education but also students' awareness of language acquisition and appropriate communication strategies.

Strong Policy. Six contributors explicitly mentioned the importance of policy formulation because language and education policies at the national, regional, and local levels can facilitate or inhibit strong language education.

In Australia one of the most successful aspects of foreign language education relates to the National Policy on Languages (NPL) (Lo Bianco, 1987), which provided a framework for language education, initiated pluralism in the languages being offered, and supported projects for indigenous and first language education. The NPL subsequently led to policy development in each of the 8 states/territories of Australia and in turn to the near-universal introduction of languages at the primary level. As a result of public language policies, both awareness and interest in languages in Australia have increased.

In Israel a new language policy, introduced in 1996 and termed "three plus" (Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999), requires the study of three compulsory languages—Hebrew, English, and Arabic—in addition to heritage, community, or world languages.

. . . language and education policies at the national, regional, and local levels can facilitate or inhibit strong language education.

Arguably one of the most influential policies with respect to foreign language learning is the status of languages within the school curriculum. In all European countries as well as in Brazil, Canada, Kazakhstan, Morocco, and Thailand, at least one foreign language is compulsory for all students. Frequently, foreign languages claim the same status as mathematics, reading, and writing, and are required for school-leaving examinations and/or university entrance.

Most of the countries surveyed begin compulsory language instruction for the majority of students in the elementary grades. . . .

Maintenance of Heritage, Regional, and Indigenous Languages. Several of our experts, including those from bilingual and multilingual countries as well as from English-speaking countries, described programs that aim to teach the mother tongue of speakers of languages other than the dominant one. These programs may contribute to foreign language success by helping maintain existing language resources in a country and by fostering language achievement among minority populations.

Some of the most successful practices in Canada are found in heritage language programs, according to our Canadian expert. Following the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1990), several provinces declared multiculturalism policies and about half of them (Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan) have heritage language programs in their official school curricula. (For further details, see Canadian Education Association, 1991; Cumming, Mackay, & Sakyi, 1994; Cummins, ed., 1991; and Helms-Park, 2000.) In addition First Nations (or Native) language maintenance programs have been developed to promote specific First Nations languages in several provinces.

In New Zealand so-called "language nests" have been established for Maori, an official language with few first language speakers, and for some Pacific Island languages. Beginning at the preschool level, children are immersed in the language, which leads them to a choice of bilingual classes or special schools where the language of instruction is Maori.

What the United States Can Learn from This

Start Language Education Early. According to our country experts, starting language teaching early gets good results. Most of the countries surveyed begin compulsory language instruction for the majority of students in the elementary grades, while most schools in the United States do not offer foreign language classes until middle or high school. A review carried out by a group of researchers at the request of the European Commission indicates that early language learning can have a very positive effect on students with respect to fostering language skills, a positive attitude toward other languages and cultures, and increased self-esteem (Blondin, et al., 1998; see also Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research, 1999).

Learn from Others. Other countries face issues similar to ours. In particular, countries like Australia and the United Kingdom share the United States' dependence on English, leaving the country vulnerable and dependent on the linguistic competence and good will of others. It is clear from the results of this study that there is much to learn from other countries' experiences.

Conduct Long-term Research. Questions such as the following need to be addressed: At what age is it best to start language instruction? What proficiency levels are reachable by what methods? Does content-based instruction provide substantially better results than language-based instruction? The U.S. education system can benefit greatly by the

development of a long-term research agenda that incorporates longitudinal studies of a variety of early language learning models of instruction.

Provide Stronger Leadership. Many of the countries described leadership and collaboration between local school authorities and the national level as helping foster a stronger language education program. In Europe the Council of Europe's focus on languages has had a very positive effect on language education and research. A stronger and more coherent governmentwide effort is needed in the United States to create an atmosphere and an opportunity to improve language education.

Identify How Technology Can Improve Language Instruction. Many of the countries surveyed are integrating technology into instruction to increase interaction with other speakers of the language and improve class instruction. But a major question remains about how successful technology really is in improving foreign language instruction. The findings call out for specific research on the best uses of technology to increase students' language proficiency.

Improve Teacher Education. Some countries, especially Finland, recruit teachers from among the best high school graduates. Other countries, like Morocco, report that their (English) language teachers are some of the best-trained teachers in the country. The United States needs to conduct a more in-depth investigation into how some countries are recruiting high caliber students to go into teaching and how others are providing top quality in-service and pre-service training.

Develop Appropriate Language Assessment. Although most countries did not highlight the use of appropriate language assessment instruments as an important aspect of their language programs, the development and implementation of such instruments is an area on which U.S. educators need to focus additional attention.

Designate Foreign Language as a Core Subject. In almost all the countries reviewed with successful language education, foreign language is a core subject in the curriculum and has the same status as other core subjects such as mathematics, writing, and reading. In the United States, experience has shown that districts and schools with foreign language study as part of a core curriculum have a more rigorous approach to curriculum development, professional development, assessment, articulation, and other key program areas.

In almost all the countries reviewed with successful language education, foreign language is a core subject in the curriculum. . . .

Take Advantage of the Socio-linguistic Context. The United States can find a diversity of languages spoken within its borders and in the countries with which it shares borders. American educators need to take advantage of the context in which they live by promoting the learning of languages (often called heritage languages) spoken by the many immigrant and indigenous communities within the United States as well as the languages of neighboring Canada and Mexico (French and Spanish in addition to a wide range of indigenous languages). One promising approach is two-way immersion, where equal numbers of language minority and language majority students study together and become bilingual in both languages of instruction.

Conclusion

It is apparent from this preliminary study that Americans have a lot to learn from the way other countries offer language education in their schools. All too often U.S. parents and educators feel that they do not have anything to learn from other countries and must only look to other examples

within our own country. Often, for example, when it is suggested to educators to look to Canadian immersion research for rationale in implementing intensive language programs in U.S. elementary schools, the response is that their school boards will not accept research that was conducted outside the United States. The time is now for Americans to open their ears and eyes to the successes of language education around the world. The entire language education profession could benefit greatly from more systematic international collaboration in our language teaching efforts.

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SPANISH POSITION AVAILABLE

The Rippowam Cisqua School is seeking a FLES Spanish Teacher to work with 3rd and 4th grade students in Northern Westchester beginning September 2001.

For further information, contact: **Marylea Franz**
Rippowam Cisqua School
325 W. Patent Rd.
Mount Kisco, NY 10549
Telephone: 914-666-3018, Ext. 313
Fax: 914-666-2339
E-mail: Marylea_Franz@rcsny.org

News from NNELL State Reps: Southern Region

A Report to the NNELL Executive Board, ACTFL 2000

Prepared by Jan Kucerik, NNELL Southern Representative

All state representatives in the Southern region were contacted at least four times during 2000. The first mailing was to send each state rep a summary of the minutes of the 1999 Board meeting. Secondly, address lists of each NNELL member categorized by state was sent to each state representative. The remaining mailings were a request for information for regional reports and networking session attendance forms. In an effort to improve communication within the region, an address list of state reps was also established on e-mail.

In a recent request for information, state reps were asked to summarize networking sessions and noteworthy accomplishments as well as challenges and concerns. They were also asked to either commit to continue to serve as state representative or name a replacement. The following summarizes the information from several states received from this inquiry.

. . . state reps were asked to summarize networking sessions and noteworthy accomplishments as well as challenges and concerns.

Florida

Janice Johnson ended her three-year tenure as Florida state representative by organizing an informative, effective, and very well attended NNELL pre-conference workshop at the FFLA (Florida Foreign Language Association) conference held in Daytona Beach October 12–14. The session, scheduled for 2 hours, extended well beyond the scheduled time as participants shared information about FLES program models, staffing concerns, scheduling, curriculum, and innovations. Four counties shared the backgrounds, philosophies, strengths and challenges of their programs. Connections were made and lines of communications fortified as more than 50 participants learned about NNELL as a valuable resource of information for beginning and sustaining successful programs.

A Saturday morning content-based FLES workshop, presented by Mimi Met, was a highlight of the FFLA Conference, which has demonstrated a commitment to offer more and more high-quality FLES sessions.

The work that Janice has done in her state on behalf of NNELL has resulted in a growing awareness of FFLA members in early language issues and a strengthened network of FLES professionals. She has held a seat on the FFLA Board and has consistently represented NNELL and early language issues in that body. She is expecting her first child in early December and will be giving up her role as Florida state rep in order to concentrate on her new family. Janice is to be congratulated for the positive results of her dedicated efforts on behalf of NNELL.

North Carolina

Susan Decker is the North Carolina state representative. Susan has been very active on behalf of NNELL in her state, having personally participated in several letter-writing campaigns and using e-mail to encourage members statewide to do the same. Two of her letters were directed to school districts that were contemplating the elimination of their FLES programs. Her third initiative related to the restructuring of the K–12 certification in North Carolina. That issue is still pending, although ALL (Advocates for Language Learning) is working closely with the State Board of Education on the matter.

Susan arranged for a panel of speakers at a continental breakfast during the recent FLANC (Foreign Language Association of North Carolina) to speak about early language issues. Although she was disappointed with the sparse attendance,

the focus of the discussion was unification of K–12 programs, an important issue in North Carolina. Susan is working to help all foreign language teachers in her state see NNELL and its mission of advocacy as relevant to all K–12 teachers. She believes that if the teachers of North Carolina worked as a K–12 team, instead of being fragmented by the labels of elementary and secondary, they could get closer to realizing their vision of developing real fluency in students. It was at this session that Susan encouraged NNELL membership.

NNELL networking and memberships efforts continued during Susan's session, *Get out your Camcorder!* using video to enhance classroom instruction.

Challenges/Concerns Susan Decker writes: "North Carolina's FLES programs are being steadily reduced in number as districts choose to use their available funds for other priorities. In spite of the 1984 mandate, school districts have the right to offer elementary foreign language or not, depending on their funds and their needs. The districts that see the value, whether they believe in the value of foreign language study or simply need to provide their classroom teachers with a planning time, will keep their programs. Those who choose to do otherwise do not want to listen to advocacy rhetoric."

Believing that school boards will listen more to parents, Susan goes on to identify parents as the group that needs to be targeted by NNELL in order to build strong FLES programs.

Susan reports that another challenge for North Carolina is recruiting new members. Although networking sessions with membership information are held at every FLANC meeting and information and membership forms are included in each issue of the *Catalyst*, FLANC's publication, membership has not increased significantly in recent years. Susan is perplexed by the reluctance of many FLES teachers in her state to join NNELL and would like to hear from some of the states with large memberships with ideas for attacking this concern.

Susan will continue as the North Carolina state representative.

South Carolina

State representative Dr. Sharon McCullough remains an active NNELL supporter and early-language-issues leader for her state. She sits on the Executive Board of SCFLTA (South Carolina Foreign Language Teachers Association) as the NNELL representative. The 2000 NNELL networking session held in March at SCFLTA was well attended. Rita Couet and Sharon McCullough taught sample lessons from *Teacher to Teacher*, after which teachers were able to purchase copies of the book. Kay Hewitt Hoag spoke on the progress FLES is making in South Carolina and had advocacy packets available.

Sharon has contacted all the foreign language coordinators in her state, asking them to encourage membership in NNELL among their FLES teachers. Sharon also reports that there are two additional districts in her state with new FLES programs. They are Georgetown County and Spartanburg, District 6.

Providing opportunities for students to get above the recall and knowledge levels to more challenging and appealing activities is something Dr. McCullough would like to share with colleagues. She would like to submit an article to *Learning Languages*.

SCOLT will meet in Myrtle Beach next March. At that conference, the South Carolina chapter of NNELL will host a NNELL networking session. The *Teacher to Teacher* publication will be highlighted. Curriculum development issues for elementary programs will also be addressed.

Sharon will continue to serve as the South Carolina state representative.

Advocacy for Foreign Language Education: A Case in Point

Martie Semmer
Breckenridge, Colorado

For as long as I can remember the media has supported the value of adults being bilingual and the benefits that adults who know more than one language offer our society. On the other hand, the media does not support academic and long-sequence Pre-Kindergarten through twelfth grade (PK–12) foreign language education, nor academic programs that provide the opportunity to become biliterate or multiliterate for children whose first language is not English. As a result, students graduate from our schools and are sent into the world as adults inadequately prepared to function fully in a worldwide community.

As a foreign language educator, I was compelled to educate at least one person. . . .

When I saw yet one more piece on the need for bilingual skills, I was livid! As a foreign language educator, I was compelled to educate at least one person, and that was the one person from the editorial staff of *The Denver Post* whose job it was to read all the letters sent by e-mail! I never thought it would go any further. Then on the evening of Thursday, January 4, 2001, I had a phone message saying *The Denver Post* would like permission to print the article! Wow! I couldn't believe it! The *Post*'s editorial and my response appear below; both are reprinted wtih permission from the publisher.

Bilingual Police Needed

As the population grows so does the need for public servants who can communicate in more than one language.

Bilingual police officers are badly needed. Those who speak Spanish in addition to English are the most valuable because of the state's—and the nation's—large Spanish-speaking populations.

Many area communities also are experiencing an increase in Russian and Asian languages.

Few departments compensate officers extra for such skills. But bilingual officers should be compensated more for providing valuable translation services for their cities.

Departments that provide officers with language instruction are on the right track, but new recruits should already be bilingual or speak a variety of languages.

Having such representatives benefits the police as well as the community. Non-English speakers feel more comfortable cooperating with officers who speak their language, and police receive fresh information that results in quick problem solving.

Although Westminster pays its officers a bonus for their bilingual skills, Denver and Aurora—cities that have high concentrations of immigrants—do not.

Members of the Denver Police Latino/a Organization have lamented the lack of additional compensation for officers who are often ordered to provide translation services outside their districts to the detriments of their own workloads.

Denver, however, is in the process of making a pitch to divide pay scales in order to compensate those officers who speak more than one language. If passed, the additional pay, expected to be taken up during the next collective bargaining session, could start as soon as August.

Aurora's administration would like to provide additional pay for bilingual officers, but it, too, has to go through a collective bargaining process.

Westminster doesn't have collective bargaining.

Police are public servants, who must be able to communicate out on the streets. Bilingual skills save us all money and time in the long run.

Support of Bilingual Ed a Smart Thing to Do

Re: "Bilingual Police Needed," Jan. 1 editorial.

"Olé" for *The Denver Post* editorial board in citing the need for bilingual police. But your solution is way too simplistic, even for the short term. Besides, this is just a minor symptom of a much greater ill: that mainstream society does not value language diversity and cultural diversity. In the world of today and tomorrow, the continued arrogance and lack of multiple perspectives and problem-solving skills of our current monolingual and monocultural majority will continue to damage relations with neighbors near and far. It is obvious that we like "foreign things" but not "foreign people." As a country made up of immigrants, we have maintained the ugly tradition of being unfriendly to those who have taken the unwanted, low-paying jobs that bolster the economy.

Our public education system must take the lead so that our young people leave our schools with the multilingual, multicultural, and multiliterate skills essential to succeed in a multifaceted world. It is already understood that all students need to begin the academic basics in preschool and kindergarten, and these skills are tested among the international community. On the other hand, U.S. students don't even participate in international studies/tests to determine their level of international communication skills; perhaps we already know that the United States ranks last.

The increasing number of non-English-speaking families in our communities and their children who enter our schools are rich resources for enhancing the critical multilingual, multicultural, and multiliterate skills needed to function in and contribute to our pluralistic society. Currently, our schools are doing an outstanding job of killing the non-English heritage of numerous children and their families. Research studies indicate that when children academically develop their heritage language along with English language skills throughout their school careers, they reach a higher degree of proficiency in English and their overall academic performance improves. Real learning of English or a foreign language—which leads to high proficiency levels—is a long-term process, just like learning math or science. The flip side is that English-speaking children are being deprived of the necessary academic English Plus skills, which includes academic PK–12 foreign language education.

Imagine if PK–12 foreign language education becomes an academic basic for all. Imagine if children and the families of non-English-speaking language and cultural background are encouraged to maintain and develop literacy skills in more than one language. Imagine if English Plus is a given. Then we will no longer experience the lack of "bilingual police" or other bilingual employees or bilingual professionals. Then our society will truly advance. Let's make a New Year's resolution to take those first steps towards a multilingual, multicultural, and multiliterate community.

— Martie Semmer
Breckenridge

Announcing a New Resource for K–12 Foreign Language Assessment

Lynn Thompson
Center for Applied Linguistics
Washington, D.C. and
National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center
Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa

We are pleased to announce the creation of an on-line K–12 foreign language assessment resource entitled *Directory of K–12 Foreign Language Assessment Instruments and Resources* which offers a wealth of information on foreign language assessment. Three different resources are offered through this directory: 1) an annotated listing of the latest foreign language assessment Web sites; 2) an annotated listing of recent printed articles, papers, and books on assessment; and 3) a searchable database of detailed descriptions of more than 200 foreign language assessments currently in use in North America, Guam, Australia, and Europe.

Development of the Directory

The directory is based on earlier assessment collections assembled by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) as part of the Performance Assessment Initiative of the National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC) at Iowa State Universtiy. In 1996–98, two annotated bibliographies of foreign language assessment resources were developed containing detailed descriptions of foreign language assessment instruments including instruments that are published and available on the Internet. In 1999 these earlier bibliographies were expanded by collecting foreign language assessment instruments for grades 9–12 and updating the annotated listings of published resources and Internet resources. We also added a new feature: this new collection was made available through the CAL as the "On-line Foreign Language Resources Guide." As of January 2001, this grade 9–12 guide has been expanded to a K–12 collection that includes updated descriptions of many of the instruments described in the 1998 bibliography. This latest collection, *Directory of K–12 Foreign Language Assessment Instruments and Resources*, has been published on the Web site of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics (www.cal.org/ericcll/k12assessment/) to enhance its accessibility and to place it in proximity to a rich collection of other foreign language teaching resources (such as reports, digests, and resource guides, all related to various aspects of foreign language teaching, learning, and assessment). The directory may also be accessed through both the CAL (www.cal.org/k12nflrc) and the NFLRC Web sites (www.educ.iastate.edu/nflrc).

The searchable database takes advantage of the interactive nature of the Internet, allowing users to customize their searches according to numerous criteria. . . .

Advantages of an On-line Publication

Publishing on-line offers a number of distinct advantages. The searchable database takes advantage of the interactive nature of the Internet, allowing users to customize their searches according to numerous criteria (e.g.,

key words in the title, language, school level, skill assessed). Users also can determine how much of the information they need at a given time and can print only that from the Web site. For the compilers, this format allows for continuous enhancement and updating of the directory. In addition, users may also contribute a description of their own assessment instrument(s) by filling out an interactive assessment submission form. Approximately half of the current entries in the database were collected or updated through the Internet.

Assessment Instrument Descriptions

The descriptions of the assessment instruments are very detailed. In addition to extensive information about the instrument itself, the description provides the name and address (often including e-mail and Web site) of a person to contact for more information. The following examples were among the 142 assessment instruments resulting from a search according to skill (speaking).

Directory of K–12 Foreign Language Assessment Instruments and Resources

Title: *FLES Oral Assessment Kit*
Test language: Spanish
Availability: Unrestricted
Current users: Columbus Public Schools, OH
Type of FL program: FLES
Intended grade level: K–5
Intended test use: Achievement, proficiency
Skills tested: Speaking, listening
Test author: Karen Kendall-Sperry
Publication date: 1995
Test cost: None
Test length: 20–25 minutes per child
Test materials: Question cards, picture to describe
Test format: Short answer, discrete point, picture description
Scoring method: Holistic
Description: This individually administered speaking and listening assessment is appropriate for all languages. For ease of administration, the examination is on cards. These cards serve as written or visual prompts for the student, or as aural prompts (the teacher reads the card without showing it to the students). Students are asked to identify objects, guess colors, count, and describe a picture. Answers may or may not be scripted. They are rated using a three-point rubric: answering without hesitation is awarded a plus; answering after repeated prompting is awarded a check; if a student cannot respond, a minus is given. Students are engaged metacognitively by being asked to verbalize their reactions to the test situation. Immediate feedback is provided to the student.
Test development and technical information: This teacher-made assessment instrument was field tested with K–5 students in May 1995.
Parallel versions in other languages: Currently available only in Spanish, but appropriate for all languages
Contact: Dr. Robert Robison
Worthington Schools
752 High Street
Worthington, OH 43085

Title: *PALS: Performance Assessment for Language Students*
Test language: German
Availability: Restricted (performance tasks for teacher use only)
Current users: Middle and high school foreign language teachers in Fairfax County, Virginia
Type of FL program: Middle/high school sequential foreign language
Intended grade level: 7–12
Intended test use: Proficiency, program evaluation
Skills tested: Speaking, writing
Test author: Fairfax County teachers
Publication date: 1998
Test cost: None
Test length: Oral (15 minutes); written (30–45 minutes)
Test materials: Rubrics, tasks, scoring devices, audio taperecorder
Test format: Short answer, student self assessment (program component)
Scoring method: Holistic, analytic
Description: This group-administered speaking and writing assessment is

based on the school curriculum and the national standards. Test components consist of speaking and writing tasks, analytic and holistic rubrics, and score conversion charts. Students are asked to respond orally to a verbal prompt and in writing to a written prompt. The program includes steps to assist students in self assessment and in devising their own "Proficiency Improvement Plan."

Test development and technical information: This assessment is teacher made and for in-house use. It has been field tested and in use for two years. The rubrics can be accessed from a Web site: www.fcps.k12.va.us/DIS/OHSICS/forlang/

Parallel versions in other languages: French, Spanish

Contact: Ms. Martha Abbott
Foreign Language Coordinator
Fairfax County Public Schools
7423 Camp Alger Avenue
Falls Church, VA 22042

Phone: (703) 208-7722

E-mail: mabbott@fc.fcps.k12.va.us

Web page: www.fcps.k12.va.us/DIS/OHSICS/forlang/

Future Goals for the *Directory of K–12 Foreign Language Assessment Instruments and Resources*

The goal of this directory is to provide the latest information on assessment practices in foreign language education through continuously expanding the searchable assessment instrument database and the annotated lists of Internet and printed assessment resources. In order to meet this goal, we need the help of readers. If you have an assessment instrument that you have developed or have come across an excellent resource that is not listed on our site, please let Lynn Thompson know by either contacting her through the Web site, or e-mailing directly to lynn@cal.org.

New Publication on High-Quality Early Language Programs

Perspectives on Policy and Practice: Establishing High-Quality Foreign Language Programs in Elementary Schools, by Douglas Gilzow and Nancy Rhodes, has just been published by the LAB at Brown University (2000). As an increasing number of school districts across the country make commitments to foreign language education for younger learners, educators and administrators are posing a number of key questions: Should foreign language study be part of the core curriculum? Are these programs suitable for districts that are not well funded? What does a successful program look like? What kind of scheduling, staffing, and long-term maintenance are involved? How should a school decide which languages to teach? Will there be lasting results?

The Center for Applied Linguistics has identified seven highly successful programs as models in providing foreign language instruction to elementary and middle school students. Based on the experiences of these and other programs, as well as on recent research, the 12-page perspectives paper offers invaluable information for administrators, teachers, and parents who are considering establishing early foreign language programs in their own communities.

For single copies of the publication, please send an e-mail to: publications@lab.brown.edu or visit the LAB online catalog at www.lab.brown.edu.

Body Parties: les parties du corps

Marilyn Sable
Pocantico Hills Central School
Sleepy Hollow, New York

Level: French or any other language; Middle School–grades 5 and 6

"Body Parties" or giant body part people is the culminating activity of a unit on body parts. It is an arts and crafts project that students do mostly at home. This project is a lot of fun and makes a great bulletin board exhibit (see photo on next page). Prior to "body parties" we picked the most disgusting bloody and bruised body parts out of a "magic" Halloween bag. We responded totally and physically to each item: we tossed eyeballs back and forth, stuck out tongues, smelled feet, whispered sweet nothings into cut-off ears, tangoed with a hand and a shirt sleeve, batted eyelashes, raised eyebrows, and polished nails. We pointed, we named, we labeled. We discussed the "verb-al" capabilities of each body part: The mouth can eat and speak—*la bouche* (mouth), *manger* (to eat), *parler* (to speak); the tongue can taste—*la langue* (tongue), *goûter* (to taste); the feet can walk, run, and jump—*les pieds* (feet), *marcher* (to walk), *courir* (to run), *sauter* (to jump); etc. We compared idioms. A Frenchman wouldn't be caught dead putting his foot in his mouth; he puts his feet in his plate. Whereas Americans merely "split hairs," the French "cut a hair in four," etc. We played *Jacques a dit* (Jacques said), we made a whole class human chain. We worked out to *Tête* (head), *épaules* (shoulders), *genoux* (knees), *et pieds* (toes). We planted cabbages in bizarre ways *Savez-vous planter les choux?* (Do you know how to plant the cabbages?) We sang and plucked *Alouette*. To the tune of *Alouette*, we ran the gamut of diseases in Barbara MacArthur's *Mal à la Tête*. In Josée Vachon's *Le remède à son talon*, we searched for cures. We scratched to Patti Lozano's *Ça me gratte la figure* and to Suzanne Pinel's *J'ai la varicelle*. We discoed with Étienne in Steven Langlois' *Rocumentaire* and threw our entire bodies and souls into *le Hoogie Boogie*.

Targeted Standards:

Communication

1.3 Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

Cultures

2.2 Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.

Connections

3.1 Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.

Comparisons

4.2 Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

Communities

5.2 Students show evidence of becoming lifelong learners by using

the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

Objectives:

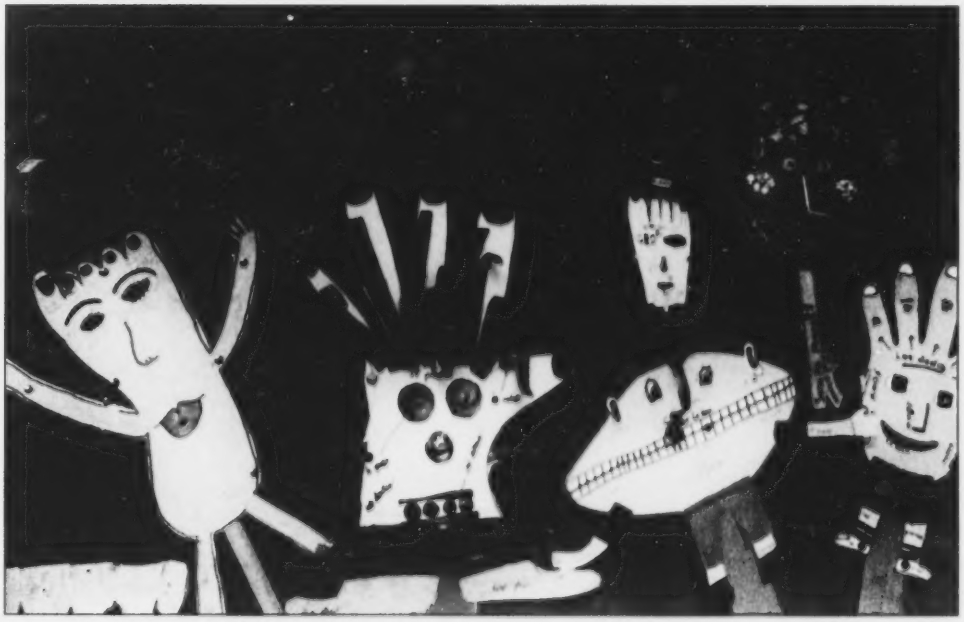
1. Students will understand and manipulate body-part vocabulary.
2. Students will create an original arts and crafts personality using mixed media.

Materials:

1. For the body: poster board, cardboard, plastic board, styrofoam, wood, etc.
2. Mounting stick: yardstick, ruler, metal stick, paint stirrer, etc.
3. Glue, tape, staples, velcro, etc. Stickers, pictures, pompoms, feathers, fur, pasta, beans, ice cream cones, fabric, ribbon, pipe cleaners, streamers, glitter, sponges, earrings, costume jewelry, cotton, shells, candy, soup, nuts, etc.

Procedures:

- Choose your favorite body part: hand, foot, heart, nose, mouth, tongue, eye(s), ear(s), etc.
- Make a giant version of the body part. Cut out its form. This will be the focus of your person.
- Give your person a name, using the title *Monsieur, Madame,* or *Mademoiselle.*
- Give your body-part person arms, legs, eyes, nose, mouth, etc.
- Label all body parts in French. Write clearly and double check your spelling.
- Mount your person on some kind of a stick so that you can hold it up and move it like a puppet.
- Give your creation a French twist: Eiffel Tower earrings perhaps; a Basque beret; lots of bracelets; a *fleur de lis* emblem; a French flag, etc.
- Be prepared to present your person.
- Be creative! Have fun!
- *Small Groups:* Write and perform a puppet show.
- *Whole class:* Students come up individually. The class creates a personality profile around each body person.
- *Individual:* Write a biography for your person.



Students' arts-and-crafts projects displayed on classroom bulletin board for les parties du corps *unit.*

Classroom Resources

For Any Foreign Language

Lakeshore Learning Materials, 2695 E. Dominguez St., PO Box 6261, Carson, CA 90749; www.lakeshore learning.com; Phone: 800-421-5354 or 310-537-8600; Fax: 310-537-5403.

Lakeshore Learning Materials has a wealth of reasonably priced resources for foreign language classes, from manipulatives, musical instruments, and art materials to pocket charts, puppets, and plastic fruit. These resources will help you organize your supplies, integrate your curriculum with manipulatives for interdisciplinary language lessons (the "connections" goal of the standards!), and illustrate your lessons with a variety of visuals. Contact them for a full catalog. The following lists describe catalog highlights for language classes:

Teacher Resources

- Easels for big books
- Stands for chart paper and books
- Rolling carts
- Freestanding, portable white boards for learning centers
- Sentence strips, chart paper pads
- Pocket charts with differently shaped pockets in a variety of sizes that hold sentence strips and/or pictures (one chart has a velcro top and pockets on the bottom to allow students to illustrate a story, the life-cycle of a frog, etc.)
- Supplies for any art project (paints, markers, an extensive array of collage materials—rhinestones, beads, buttons, pre-cut paper shapes, crinkle strips, pipe cleaners, and lots more)

Literacy Materials

- Cloth characters for classic children's books and songs (such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?,* and *Corduroy, Old MacDonald Had a Farm, The Wheels on the Bus, Five Green and Speckled Frogs, I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Pie*—with the old lady sewn on the apron so that the students can slip the food into her mouth) to be used with storytelling aprons and felt/velcro tabletop easels or pocket charts
- Storytelling gloves with sticky glove puppets for many classic stories such as, *The Three Bears, The Three Little Pigs, The Itsy Bitsy Spider,* and *Five Little Ducks*
- Activity kit for *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* that includes a cloth caterpillar puppet (that turns inside-out to form a butterfly) and large laminated food props (of the book illustrations by Eric Carle) to slip over the caterpillar on your arm
- Soft activity walls of the farm, the city, and ocean scenes complete with stuffed cloth shapes of the animals, plants, and transportation
- Hats and child-sized uniforms from different careers
- Plastic manipulatives—sets of food for lunch, dinner, and breakfast, fruit and vegetable assortments, cooking utensils and dishes, tubs of small plastic manipulatives (animals—insects, wild animals, sea life), food and nutrition, space, seasons and weather, transportation, and all about me

Math Materials

- Cards for sorting, graphing, patterning, and counting
- Small plastic manipulatives—fruit, cars, animals, shapes
- Manipulatives for the overhead projector in different shapes

Science Materials

- A nursery for hatching butterflies
- Stamps for each stage in the life cycle of a frog, a plant, or a butterfly
- An 18" green frog to dress with colorful clothing for the four seasons
- Plus animal manipulatives that depict the food chain, animals that hatch from

eggs, how a hermit crab survives
- A growing box for planting seeds that allows students to see (and measure) how plants grow under the ground
- sets of realistic plastic pond or sea animals

Multicultural Materials
- Musical instruments (a Chilean rainstick, a Mexican guiro, a Zulu marimba, a West African balaphon)
- Poster sets of children of the world, families, and emotions
- multi-ethnic puppets and soft dolls (Asian, Black, White, and Hispanic and community workers)
- People Shapes™–chipboard shapes in 12 People Colors™ to make puppets with assorted clothing, yarn for hair, and materials for creating faces and decorating clothing
- Plastic foods from many cultures—a basket of breads from around the world, sets of Italian, Chinese, Mexican, or Japanese foods
- Child-sized clothing from different cultures (a Mexican *falda* and *blusa*, a Nigerian *Iro*, *buda*, and *gele*, a Vietnamese *ao dai*, a Ghanaian *dashiki* and *kuka*, a Guatemalan *toto* and *camisa*, and a Japanese *happi* coat)

Sunday, May 7, 2000

Dear Myriam,

I heard you speak and attended one of your wonderful workshops at Connecticut COLT recently. But I was even more impressed with your column in the latest issue of Learning Languages [Vol. 5, No. 2]. *It was the first time I had seen my job described in such exact terms. You really understand and know what's going on.*

Presently, I travel to two schools and teach one class of fifth grade (45 minutes) and ten sections of grades 2, 3, and 4 (15 minutes each) everyday. I have no classroom to call my own in either school but share some "space" in the elementary school with the reading consultants. That, however, next year may become a memory; for several years my space consisted of a cabinet on wheels and a folding chair in the hallway. Of course, add to that the responsibilities of curriculum and assessment. Plus, I don't even get the equivalent planning time of other part-time "specials" teachers. The physical, emotional, and intellectual drain at the end of the day is tremendous. Burnout is a distinct possibility. The love of teaching Spanish, professional development opportunities to enable me to be with my peers, support from my principal and other staff members, and the positive response from the children and parents are things that keep me going. My goal is to be in one school and serve the entire PK to 4 population. That, however, according to my administrator, won't be a possibility for years.

I have had my job for four years now. In fact, one year I even taught in three schools per day; another year I taught thirteen 15-minute classes a day in two schools. I firmly believe that my schedule—as well as those of many, many other FLES teachers—is just too much! I hope that NNELL someday will have the political clout to change the mindset of some district administrators who create such schedules and don't understand how difficult they are and the toll they take on their dedicated teachers. Which brings me to the reason I am writing you . . .

On the Ñandu listserv—nandu@caltalk.cal.org—periodically contributors (other than me) have brought up the issue of overscheduling and burnout. I believe the appearance of your Learning Languages *letter on the listserv would be a tremendous service to the dedicated FLES teachers out there who—like me—feel like a lone voice crying in the desert. Perhaps, too, membership in NNELL would increase, adding to the power of NNELL's voice.*

Thanks for listening. This issue of Learning Languages *was the best ever!*

Sincerely,

Kathy Siddons

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What's the Flap about FLAP?

Joint National Committee for Languages
(Adapted from the JNCL-NCLIS Web site: www.languagepolicy.org)

FLAP Is in Trouble

The Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) has provided key funding for elementary school foreign language programs for many NNELL members in recent years. Two political processes are currently affecting the future of FLAP: appropriations and reauthorization. There are several bills currently "out" in both houses of Congress that propose to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 (last reauthorized in 1994 as the "Improving America's Schools Act"). Although these two plans are only proposals and not formal legislation, Congress will soon begin work on the reauthorization of ESEA. Therefore, it is important that NNELL members be informed about this process and that they advocate for this key federal support for early language learning.

The President

In the first week of his presidency, President Bush announced his education plan, "No Child Left Behind." The plan consists of seven performance-based titles that stress accountability, parent choice, and annual assessments. Bush's education plan, however, fails to include any provisions for the Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP).

The same week, Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) and the New Democrats announced a counterpart to Bush's proposal, "The Public Education Reinvestment, Reinvention and Responsibility Act" (Three R's). Like the Bush plan, Lieberman's proposal does not include FLAP.

The Senate

In the spring of 1999, Senator Kennedy introduced S. 1180, the "Educational Excellence for All Children Act," which reauthorizes the entire ESEA, and which strengthens FLAP. Representative Clay introduced this same bill in the House as H.R. 1960. At this time, no floor action has been taken on either bill. Senator Cochran introduced S. 601, the "Foreign Language Improvement Amendments of 1999," which also strengthens FLAP.

On March 9, 2000, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) passed S. 2, its version of the ESEA reauthorization, by a party-line vote. While Republicans and Democrats continue to clash along ideological lines (Republicans support increased flexibility and decreased federal involvement in local education; Democrats support strengthening and improving federal education programs), they have left FLAP largely untouched.

The House of Representatives

The following legislation has passed the House: H.R. 1995, the "Teacher Empowerment Act;" H.R. 2300, the "Academic Achievement for All Act" (a.k.a. Straight A's), and H.R. 2, the "Student Results Act." All three are part of a House attempt to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Although the ESEA

As members of NNELL . . . it is time to write letters to your members of Congress. . . .

reauthorization will determine which programs are allowed to be funded after it becomes law, it does not affect FY 2000 funding for any programs. However, the three House bills that have passed do not mention the Foreign Language Assistance Program. Sources at the House Committee on Education and the Workforce have told JNCL that House Republicans have decided to eliminate FLAP and similar smaller programs in their attempts to de-federalize public education.

The attacks on FLAP have continued as the House Committee on Education and the Workforce marks up its fourth ESEA reauthorization bill, H.R. 4141, the "Education OPTIONS (Education Opportunities To Protect and Invest In Our Nation's Students) Act," also known as the "State and Local Transferability Act." This is a large block grant, which appears to be the committee's final step in reauthorization, and which eliminates FLAP and other federal education programs by omission.

NNELL Members' Advocacy Urgently Needed

As members of NNELL and as professionals committed to early language learning programs for our nation's children, it is time to write letters to your members of Congress to let them know that know that the Foreign Language Assistance Program should be maintained and strengthened. It is important that you write to both your senators and representatives and that you urge them to support FLAP and include it in this year's reauthorization of ESEA. Go to the JNCL Web site (www.language policy.org) to see a sample letter to a senator and one to a representative that you can personalize.

NOMINATIONS OPEN:
NNELL Executive Board for Fall 2001

NNELL is currently seeking nominees for second vice-president and secretary. Nominations for these positions should be made in the form of a letter or e-mail. Include the nominee's name, home address, and telephone number. Nominees must be current NNELL members. The second vice-president serves a one-year term, then succeeds to first vice-president, president, and past-president, serving for a total of four years. The secretary serves for two years and is responsible for the minutes of the board meetings and maintaining the historical records. Nominees must be able to attend the annual board meeting, which is held one or two days prior to the ACTFL annual meeting in November.

Please send letters or e-mails of nomination no later than April 2, 2001, to Myriam Met, Chair, Nomination Committee, NFLC, 1029 Vermont Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20005. E-mail: mmet@nflc.org. Mail ballots will be sent to members in April. The results will be announced in the fall.

Calendar

Spring 2001 Conferences

March 29–April 1, 2001
Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. New York, New York. Northeast Conference, Dickinson College, P.O. Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013-2896; 717-245-1977; Fax: 717-245-1976; E-mail: nectfl@dickinson; Web site: www.dickinson.edu/nectfl.

April 26–28, 2001
Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Indianapolis, Indiana. Diane Ging, Executive Director, CSC, P.O. Box 21531, Columbus, OH 43221-0531; 614-529-0109; Fax: 614-529-0321; E-mail: dging@iwaynet.net.

May 17–19, 2001
Building on Our Strengths: Second International Conference on Language Teacher Education. Minneapolis, MN. Language Teacher Education Conference (01-2491), University of Minnesota, P.O. Box 64780, St. Paul, MN 55164-0780; 800-367-5363; FAX: 612-624-9221; E-mail: tjb@umn.edu; Web site: http://carla.acad.umn.edu/conferences.html.

Summer 2001 Courses and Workshops

June 17–July 13, 2001
Teacher Preparation for Elementary and Middle School Foreign Languages. Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota. Carol Ann Pesola Dahlberg, Concordia College, Moorhead, MN 56562; 218-299-4511; E-mail: cadahlbe@cord.edu.

June 24–28, 2001
National FLES* Institute. University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Maryland. Dr. Gladys C. Lipton, 301-231-0824; Fax 301-230-2652; E-mail: lipton@umbc2.umbc.edu; Web site: http://homepages.go.com/~gladys_c_lipton.

July 16–25, 2001
Teaching Foreign Languages to Young Students. Mari Haas, 212-865-5382; E-mail: haasmarib@aol.com. Registration: The Center for Educational Outreach and Innovation, Teachers College, 525 W. 120th St., Box 132, New York, NY 10027-6696; 212-678-3987.

July 16–26, 2001
K–8 Foreign Languages: Leading the Way with Teacher Preparation. Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey; Marcia Harmon Rosenbusch, National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center, N131 Lagomarcino Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; 515-294-6699; Fax: 515-294-2776; E-mail: nflrc@iastate.edu; Web site: www.educ. iastate.edu/nflrc.

August 8–16, 2001
Integrating Technology into the Foreign Language Classroom. Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. Marcia Harmon Rosenbusch, National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center, N131 Lagomarcino Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; 515-294-6699; Fax: 515-294-2776; E-mail: nflrc@iastate.edu; Web site: www.educ.iastate.edu/nflrc.

Are You Using Distance Learning or a Video Program with Young Students? . . . *We'd Like to Hear from YOU!*

As school administrators and teachers turn to video-based and distance-learning programs to teach foreign languages to children, educators urgently need more information about the implementation and instructional value of such programs. The Center for Applied Linguistics, as part of its work with the federally funded National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center at Iowa State University, is studying the benefits and drawbacks of using distance-learning technology to teach languages to young children.

One outcome of this research will be a practical guide about the overall benefits of video-based instruction for children and descriptions of the six most commonly used language programs in U.S. schools. However, meaningful conclusions will depend on input from educators who are actually using these programs in the classroom. If you are teaching foreign languages with the help of any of the following programs, we invite—and encourage—you to give us your feedback:

- *Amigos* (Agency for Instructional Technology)
- *Elementary Spanish* (Northern Arizona University)
- *Español Para Ti* (National Textbook Co./Contemporary Publishing Co.)
- *Saludos/InterActive Spanish* (Great Plains National University of Nebraska)
- *MUZZY* (Early Advantage)
- *SALSA* (PeachStar, Georgia Public Broadcasting)

The Center for Applied Linguistics has developed a short questionnaire to gather information about these programs from administrators and teachers. If you can help, please contact us. We will e-mail, mail, or fax you the questionnaire. Or, you can do a phone interview. Thank you in advance!

Contact: Ingrid Pufahl, Project Consultant
Address: Center for Applied Linguistics, 4646 40th St., NW, Washington, DC 20016
Telephone: (301) 530-4766
Fax: (202) 362-3740
Email: ingrid@cal.org

NNELL

NNELL is an organization for educators involved in teaching foreign languages to children. The mission of the organization is to promote opportunities for all children to develop a high level of competence in at least one language in addition to their own. NNELL provides leadership, support, and service to those committed to early language learning and coordinates efforts to make language learning in programs of excellence a reality for all children.

NNELL

An organization for educators involved in teaching foreign languages to children.

MISSION: Promote opportunities for all children to develop a high level of competence in at least one language in addition to their own. This is accomplished through activities that improve public awareness and support of early language learning.

ACTIVITIES: Facilitate cooperation among organizations directly concerned with early language learning, facilitate communication among teachers, teacher educators, parents, program administrators, and policymakers; and disseminate information and guidelines to assist in developing programs of excellence.

ANNUAL MEETING: Held at the fall conference of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

OFFICERS: Elected by members through a mail ballot election held annually in the spring.

MEMBER OF: JNCL-NCLIS (Joint National Committee for Languages-National Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and International Studies).

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Visit the NNELL Web site at: www.educ.iastate.edu/nnell

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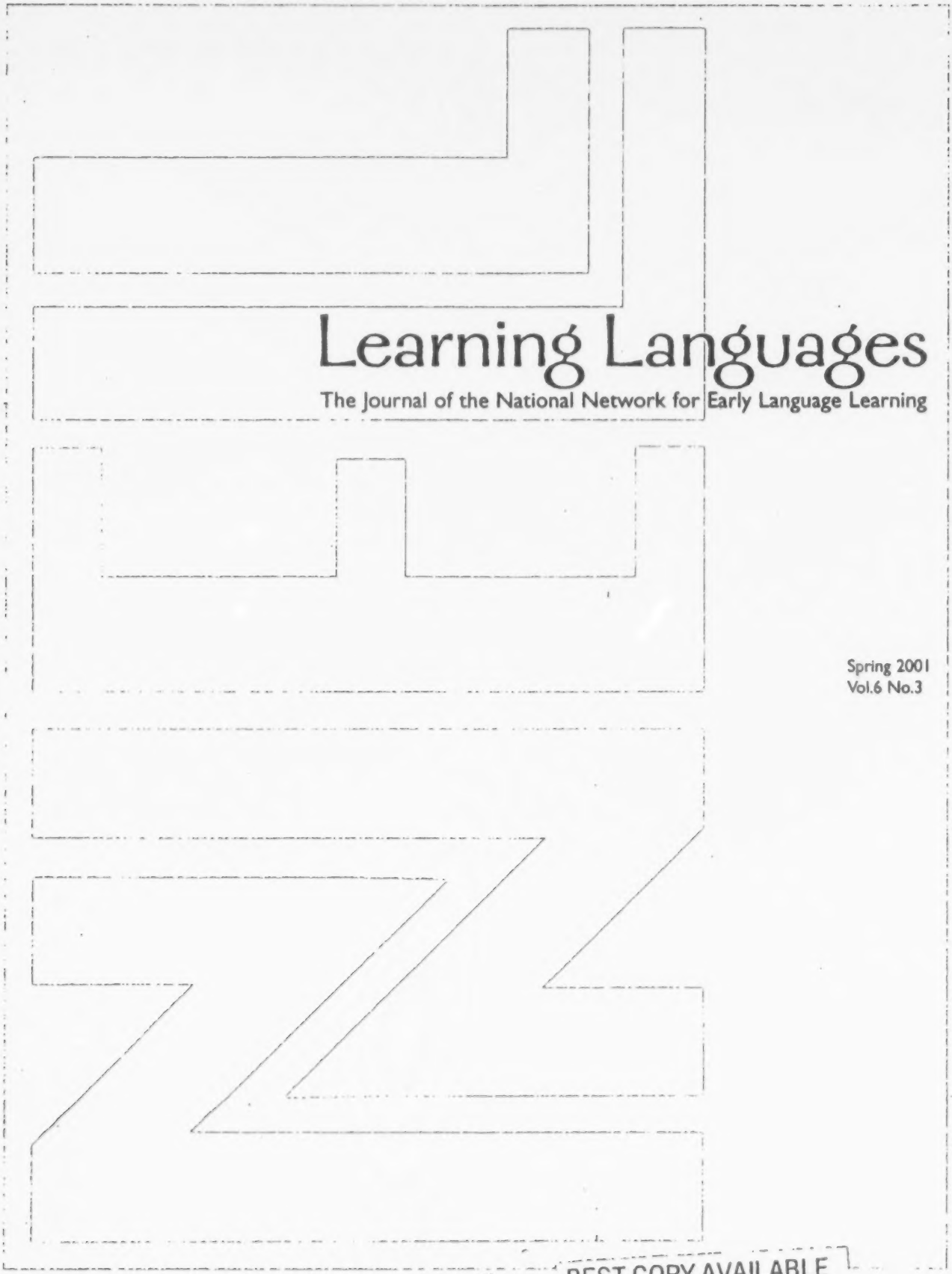

Learning Languages

The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning

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Learning Languages: The Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning is published in the Spring, Fall and Winter as the official publication of NNELL. It serves the profession by providing a medium for the sharing of information, ideas, and concerns among teachers, administrators, researchers, and others interested in the early learning of languages. The journal reflects NNELL's commitment to promote opportunities for all children to develop a high level of competence in at least one language and culture in addition to their own. See the inside back cover for more information on NNELL.

Articles Published: Both practical and scholarly articles are published. Practical articles describe innovative approaches to teaching and the administration of effective language programs for children. Scholarly articles report on original research and cite both current research and theory as a basis for making recommendations for practice. Scholarly articles are refereed, i.e., reviewed anonymously by at least three readers. Readers include members of the NNELL executive board, the editorial advisory board, and invited guest reviewers who have expertise in the area. Refereed articles are identified as such in the journal. Write to the Editor to request a copy of author guidelines for preparing articles, or retrieve them from NNELL's Web site (www.educ.iastate.edu/nnell).

Submissions: Deadlines are: Fall issue—May 1; Winter issue—Nov. 1; Spring issue—Feb. 1. Articles, classroom activities, and materials may be submitted to the appropriate Contributing Editor. Send announcements, conference information, and original children's work (such as line drawings, short stories, and poems) to the Editor. Children's work needs to be accompanied by written permission from the child's parent or guardian and must include the child's name, age, school, and the teacher's name, address, and telephone (add fax and e-mail address, if available). Submit a favorite classroom activity for the "Activities for Your Classroom" section by sending a description of the activity that includes title, context, objectives, targeted standards, materials, procedure, and assessment. Include pictures or drawings as illustration, if available. Send with your name, address, and phone number to the Classroom Activities Editor.

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Notes from the President

"English + 1 + 2 gets it done." This was the message that Dr. L. Jay Oliva shared with attendees at the 2001 Northeast Conference during his keynote address. Dr. Oliva is the president of New York University and is the first New York University faculty member to become president. A fluent speaker of French, Dr. Oliva is very involved in the life of the institution and its students. He teaches Russian history to undergraduates in addition to his presidential responsibilities.

In an engaging manner Dr. Oliva challenged a number of false assumptions such as English as the language of convenience for ordinary business. Dr. Oliva clarified the "everyone speaks English" argument by distinguishing between talking about lost luggage and understanding the soul of a people. English may be the current international language of convenience and lost luggage, but English will not gain entry to the society and soul of a non-English- speaking culture. For real understanding we must have the language of the soul, the language of the people.

Dr. Oliva's words inspire us to challenge current U.S. statistics on second-language proficiency. How many American students today become proficient in a second language beyond the level of convenience and reach true understanding? The answer is quite sobering indeed. In their 1998 study Rhodes and Branaman report that while more elementary schools now offer foreign language programs, less than one-third of our students attend an elementary school where languages are offered during the school day. We know that long and strong foreign language sequences are the keys to proficiency and cultural understanding.

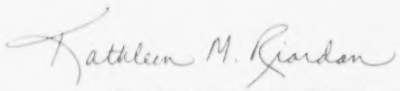
In reality, when it comes to elementary school foreign language learning, most American children are being left behind. Future efforts to provide support for improving the teaching of foreign languages at the elementary school level are at risk because of executive and legislative action and inaction in Washington, D.C., on the Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP). In recent years FLAP has provided much-needed federal funding for elementary school foreign language programs. If these funds become part of block grants to states, without specific requirement for the use of funds for elementary foreign language programs, this important source of funding will disappear.

Thanks to all of you who have written letters of support for FLAP. And special thanks to Lori de Langer Ramirez, NNELL Secretary, who organized the mailing of 40, yes *forty*, letters from her school in support of FLAP. Many thanks also to the Joint National Committee on Languages (JNCL), of which NNELL is a member, which organized a national letter-writing campaign through its Web site (www.languagepolicy.org), at conference sessions, and at the JNCL meeting. At the latter JNCL focused the efforts of its members on lobbying for FLAP during their face-to-face visits with members of Congress.

Now, are you interested in supporting and involving parents in children's foreign language learning? Of course, we all are! If you are

looking for some additional ideas and strategies, log on to the New Jersey project Web site (www.fdu.edu or www.globalteachinglearning.com) for information about the GAINS (Gaining Achievement in New Standards) Project. GAINS is a joint effort of the Foreign Language Office at New Jersey's Department of Education and Fairleigh Dickinson University. Hats off to Janis Jensen, New Jersey's Foreign Language Consultant and NNELL member, for her role in this fine work.

We are in times of great challenge and great opportunity. We must take inspiration from our colleagues doing excellent work in foreign language classrooms around the country. Our collective good work should motivate us to organize to protect and even expand our current programs as we work to assure that no child is left behind when it comes to quality early language learning programs. We believe that all American children have the right to learn at least one language in addition to English at the level of "a language of the soul." Working together we will make English + 1 + 2 a reality!



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Teachers Needed!

New York

East Rockaway Public Schools, East Rockaway, New York has a full-time foreign language teaching position available for the 2001–2002 school year. The candidate should have, or be eligible for, NYS certification in Spanish and/or Italian, 7–12 and/or elementary K–6. An elementary program is in place for 5th and 6th grades. Contact Dr. Elvira Morse, East Rockaway Junior-Senior High School, 443 Ocean Ave., East Rockaway, NY 11518 or call 516-887-8300 Ext. 100 for more information.

Illinois

Northbrook, Illinois, District 28 has an open 5th grade French position for the 2001-2002 school year. Contact Jessica Mann, 1475 Maple Ave., Northbrook, IL 60062 or call 847-498-7900 for more information.

Washington, D.C.

Loudoun County Public Schools, 25 miles northwest of Washington, D.C., is seeking teachers for K–1 Spanish. Applicants must be fluent in Spanish, with an endorsement in elementary education or foreign language K–12. Visit the Web site at www.loudoun.k12.va.us or call 703-771-6424 for more information.

Learning through Dialogue Journal Writing: A Cultural Thematic Unit

Refereed Article

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Imagine this elementary foreign language program scenario: Spanish classes that meet every three days for 15 minutes. The program's teacher travels from class to class and from school to school, teaching in as many as 17 classrooms in one day. In addition, since the program's goal is to provide all children, grades one through five, an exposure to two foreign languages, the students spend one half of the school year learning Spanish and the other half of the year learning French.

In the United States this scenario is not uncommon. Rhodes and Branaman (1998) report that Foreign Language Exploratory (FLEX) programs are the most common type of American elementary school foreign language programs. FLEX programs expose children to one or more new languages but do not allow elementary students to gain proficiency in the language.

After having taught Spanish in a FLEX program for several years, this teacher-researcher was asked by a second grade classroom teacher what her students were gaining educationally from such a limited amount of instructional time in Spanish. At that time, the teacher-researcher was unable to provide an immediate or definitive answer because assessment was not an integral component of the curriculum she had designed and so carefully perfected many times over. How could she take time to formally assess when it was so important to use every minute to teach language and culture?

Frustrated by the lack of time to plan for assessment, the teacher-researcher began to search for a way to answer this classroom teacher's important question. This search resulted in valuable documentation of student learning through an ongoing dialogue between the students and the teacher-researcher (who was the Spanish teacher) through dialogue journals.

Thus began a four-year teacher action research project focused on the following question: *Can student dialogue journals provide documentation of student learning from a cultural unit taught in Spanish?* In 1995 the teacher-researcher received a grant from the Fundación Cultural de Yucatán for three weeks of travel and study in Yucatán, Mexico. The purposes of the visit were to learn more about Yucatán's cultural celebrations and, upon returning home, to develop a curriculum unit. The resulting unit, *Fiestas de Yucatán* (Borich, 1997), as outlined in Appendix A, was intended to provide students with real-life cultural experiences while learning Spanish.

Can student dialogue journals provide documentation of student learning from a cultural unit taught in Spanish?

Unit Background

In 1996 the National Standards in Foreign Language Education project

defined five goals for foreign language education—Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996). The standards were used to refine the *Fiestas de Yucatán* unit.

While this thematic unit provides experiences for children in all five goals of the national student standards, two of the goals are emphasized—Cultures and Connections. In the unit, as students learn to communicate in Spanish (Communication), they make connections between the subject areas of math, science, geography, social studies, and the arts (Connections). Because students "travel" to Yucatán, and hear and speak Spanish throughout the simulated trip, their awareness of similarities and differences between their own state and Yucatán become evident (Comparisons). As students make these comparisons, they discover that in many ways the two states share many commonalties. Finally, having participated in celebrations "in Yucatán" and learned songs and language typical of the Yucatán area (Cultures), the students share their experiences with their families (Communities). Through the integration possible within a thematic unit, an interweaving of these five goals occurs.

In order to gain experience in the development and implementation of student assessments for the *Fiestas de Yucatán* curriculum unit, the teacher-researcher attended the Performance Assessment Institute of the National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC) at Iowa State University (ISU) in the summers of 1997 and 1998. These institutes enhanced the teacher-researcher's awareness of, and interest in, all types of assessments, particularly alternative assessments. Self-assessment, journals, and portfolios were particularly interesting to the teacher-researcher. The use of dialogue journals was the teacher-researcher's first formal attempt to assess students' learning of the Yucatán curriculum unit.

Fiestas de Yucatán Unit Design

The design of this unit brings together culture, language, and content around the thematic center of "celebrations." The choice of the theme of celebrations is especially appropriate to lower elementary students because of their natural interest in, and enthusiasm for, celebrations in their own communities. This unit also addresses geography, weather, and the ancient culture of the Maya.

Thematic instruction, as used in the *Fiestas de Yucatán* unit, is an effective curriculum-planning tool for the elementary school foreign language classroom. As an integrated approach to teaching, it can complement the existing school curricula, including such subjects as math, science, reading, and language arts (Curtain & Pesola, 1994). Thematic planning also can be a "point of departure for the implementation of national and state standards" (Rosenbusch, 1997, p. 15).

The unit focuses on two celebrations—a child's birthday party and the *Posadas* (nine Mexican religious celebrations held the nine days before Christmas). In this unit students participate in cultural activities that help them connect ideas and information through the theme. This way of teaching contrasts with teaching language and concepts in isolation, as often occurs in social studies and foreign language classes.

In this unit students participate in cultural activities that help them connect ideas and information through the theme.

Assessment in Elementary School Foreign Language Programs

At the elementary level, many foreign language teachers use instructional strategies that are communicative in nature; however, very little information is available on how teachers assess students at this level (Thompson, 1997). Furthermore,

because the issue of assessing the language of young learners is new, Shohamy (1998) advises the profession that research is "urgently needed" given the many different types of elementary school foreign language programs now in existence (p. 185).

Most elementary school foreign language educators agree that assessment must be an integral part of program evaluation (Curtain & Pesola, 1994; Donato, 1998; and Rosenbusch, 1991). Without ongoing assessment, elementary school foreign language programs run the risk of being considered of marginal importance. Donato (1998) and Curtain and Pesola (1994) caution that the lack of assessment procedures for foreign language programs in the early grades implies that foreign language is a subject area of minimal importance. When foreign language is regarded as an "extra," neither students nor parents regard it as being of "equal status with the rest of the curriculum" (Curtain & Pesola, 1994, p. 221).

Implications for Assessing the Young Language Learner

Because foreign language instruction varies greatly from school to school, assessment has to be "grounded in the classroom and instruction" (Hamayan, 1998, p. 178). Hamayan proposes that the planning process include consideration of two basic questions. First, what is the purpose of the assessment? Second, who will use the results of assessment? After these questions have been answered, the teacher can begin planning what to assess, when to assess, and how to record information.

These three considerations for planning assessment apply to learners of all ages, however, Shohamy (1998) explains that there are additional, unique considerations for the young language learner. First, assessment planning should match the assessment procedure to the cognitive development and maturity of the test taker. Second, the child's level of literacy in his or her first language should be considered when testing literacy in the second language. Finally, some consideration of the young learner's cultural background should be made. The socio-psychological factors, such as attitude toward test taking, also should be considered since young children have not yet been "socialized in taking tests" (p.188).

The Dialogue Journal as an Alternative Assessment

The dialogue journal is a whole language activity in the form of a notebook in which students communicate individually with the teacher (Peyton & Reed, 1990). As Patzelt (1995) explains, whole language is an approach to teaching language that views language as a "whole entity." Thus, the skills of writing, speaking, reading, and listening should be integrated. According to Hall (1994), interactive writing can facilitate children's writing skills. Hall notes that this type of writing gives the child a reason to be an "author" and aids in the transition from oral to written communication.

The research with dialogue journals Peyton and Reed (1990) have conducted with ESL students indicates that keeping a journal, which allows assessment to occur on a formative, daily basis, is an appropriate strategy to use with young learners. With journals, students are continually providing feedback about what they understand in class as they progress in their language abilities, which can lead the teacher to improve instruction for each student.

Peyton and Reed (1990) found that the logistics of reading and responding to dialogue journals may discourage busy classroom teachers' use of this activity. Yet teachers who have found ways to manage the process report that the information they gain about students' interests and problems, as well as the feedback they receive about classroom activi-

ties, pays off in facilitating the instructional planning process.

Shohamy (1998) advocates the use of dialogue journals because they provide the teacher with information about young learner's perspectives on language learning as well as involve them in the learning process. Moffet (as cited in Jensen, 1993) states the importance of giving children a reason to write. Learning to write occurs best "in the same mixture with other activities" and when children have a "reason to write, an intended audience and control of subject matter and form" (p. 293). Because of these factors, many teachers and researchers now recognize that the learning of writing is a social process. To provide children writing experiences that focus only on correct spelling, punctuation, usage, diction, paragraph structure, and organization (adult standards) denies them the opportunity to see themselves as writers.

Action Research Plan

To explore the research question, the teacher-researcher used qualitative research methods, specifically, action research, which is a genre of qualitative inquiry. Unlike quantitative inquiry with its "pre-specified intent," this research was evolutionary (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 6).

Once the problem (lack of assessment for the *Fiestas de Yucatán* unit) came into focus, the teacher-researcher sought how best to proceed in assessing second grade students, given the constraints of short instructional time periods. The students themselves also contributed (inadvertently) to the design process by virtue of their creative responses to three simple questions the teacher-researcher posed four years ago: "During our imaginary trip to Yucatán, a) what did you learn, b) what did you like about our trip, and c) what would you have changed?" The insightful responses of second graders to those questions revealed that they are capable of sharing in written form what they learn. The combination of information gained at the Performance Assessment Institutes, the students' initial responses, and input on assessment sought from the students' classroom teachers, all contributed to the plan to use dialogue journals as a form of assessment.

The teacher-researcher began with a pilot study using dialogue journals in response to open-ended writing tasks. As the pilot study proceeded, ways to improve the assessment procedure evolved: a) giving students topics to write about after each Spanish lesson to help them get started writing; b) placing a written topic header on each page in the student journal to help students stay focused; c) writing Spanish vocabulary words on the board to encourage students to use Spanish in their journals. In addition, the idea of getting written feedback from parents about the child's journal developed during the pilot study. Lastly, the pilot study used a focus group of participating teachers to reflect on the value of the experience.

Participants in Study

For the formal study in the fall of 1999, two classes of second graders were selected by the teacher-researcher for student journal and parent questionnaire analysis (the journal students). The other second grade students received the same instruction but did not journal about the Spanish class (the non-journal students). The two journal-student classes were chosen because of their classroom teachers' interest in learning more about the foreign language learning of their students and their willingness to have their students write in their journals during regular class time about their Spanish classes. The classrooms, located in different buildings within the school district, included students of both genders and varying abilities.

Data Collection Instruments

The dialogue journal format was essentially an unstructured questionnaire soliciting open-ended responses. Students were asked to respond in their journals to more than 20 questions. After preliminary data analysis, 9 of these questions (see Appendix B) were selected for further analysis because they best addressed the learning related to the Cultures and Connections goals of the national standards (National Standards in Foreign Language Project, 1996).

The parent questionnaire, which solicited open-ended responses, was designed to be completed after the parent/s and child had read and discussed the journal entries together. A parental permission form, which included information about the student journals and introduced the idea of integrating Spanish objectives and assessment through this writing project, had been sent home with students at the beginning of this study.

Research Procedures

Data Sources. The primary source of data in this study is the student journals. However, two additional sources of data were used to corroborate what had been observed in reading, interpreting, and summarizing the data of the student journals. First, two separate focus groups of second grade teachers who were familiar with the curriculum were conducted. During these focus groups, the teachers were asked questions that allowed them to contribute their observations and perspectives on student learning of the target culture and making connections between the Spanish curriculum and other content areas. Second, parent questionnaires sought parental input and feedback about student learning after students shared their journals at home. Third, during the time the teacher-researcher responded to students in their journals, she kept her own journal noting her interpretations of their entries.

Student Journal Procedures. Students were given at least 15 minutes in their regular classrooms to write and draw in their journals. Teachers indicated in the focus group that they encouraged students to write first and draw later. Thus, the amount of time students had to draw varied, and the quality of the drawings varied considerably from student to student.

Although the drawings were visually descriptive of the taught lessons, not all drawings were descriptive of the lesson content and, therefore, did not exemplify the student's understanding of content. For example, sometimes students would draw a picture of themselves or a classmate participating in a classroom activity. Sometimes students had time to add color to their drawing, but other drawings appeared unfinished. In any case, in data analysis, one point was given for evidence of learning through written response, drawing, or both. In some cases, a child's drawing was the only indication of his or her learning; in other cases a child's drawing supplemented his or her written evidence of learning.

The three figures included here illustrate the students' imaginary trip to Yucatán. Figure 1 shows a student's recollection of the class arriving at the airport, where the palm trees and a hot sun welcomed everyone. In Figure 2 the student's drawing shows the differences between a house in the small town of Tinum *(right)* and in the city of Mérida *(left)*. In Figure 3, a student remembers a countryside scene with a palm-leaf house, a windmill, and a farm animal. Each drawing reflects some aspect unique to Yucatán.

The three figures included here illustrate the students' imaginary trip to Yucatán.

Focus Groups. At the conclusion of teaching the unit, an outside moderator conducted two focus groups with second grade teachers. The focus groups provided the classroom teachers' perspective regarding student learning. The researcher was not present at the focus group meeting to

Figure 1. Arrival in Yucatán

Figure 2. Houses of Tinum and Mérida

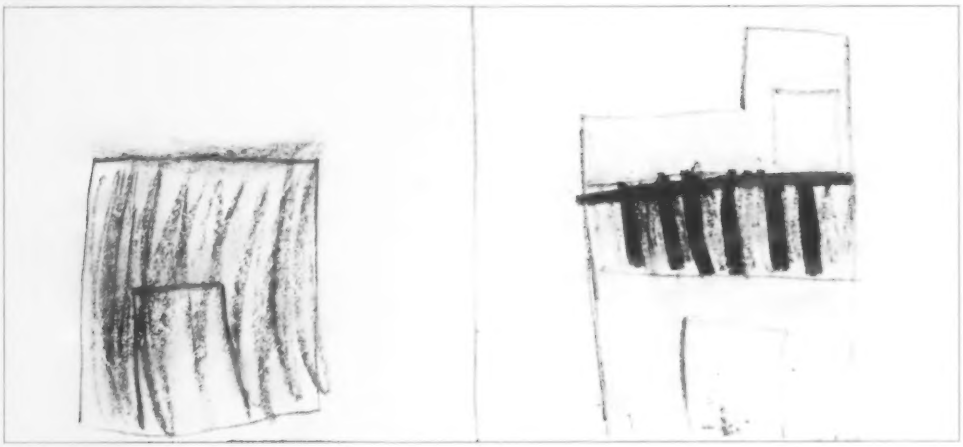

Figure 3. Yucatán's countryside

avoid bias that might affect discussions and inhibit the classroom teacher from participating fully in the discussions. The questions addressed in the group discussions were: a) How much culture have the children learned from their imaginary trip? and b) How many connections have they made to the classroom curriculum?

Teacher-Researcher Journal. After responding to the students' entries in their journals, the teacher-researcher wrote in her journal. The goal of this journal was to record "in the field" reflections that might otherwise be lost. Exemplary student entries or student entries that revealed mistaken perceptions were collected, noted, and reflected upon in this journal. The teacher-researcher journal also guided the selection of the nine questions for content analysis.

Data Analysis. The initial stages of data analysis of the student journals began with transcribing the journals by typing the entries in a computer and grouping them by class and student, then making copies of the student illustrations that accompanied the journal text. The teacher-researcher then reviewed and categorized the student journal entries and illustrations. These categories were finalized with a review of the categories identified in the teacher-researcher's journal. Finally, the journal entries were coded and entered on a matrix.

Next, the teacher-researcher reviewed the transcripts of the focus groups several times to categorize, code, and compare the observations made by the students' classroom teachers. Last, the parent questionnaires were categorized and frequencies were calculated on the categories. The categories across all sources of data were analyzed.

Student Responses

Analysis of the student journal responses, the centerpiece of this research, gave ample evidence of learning related to the two goals of Cultures and Connections. A key goal of this thematic unit was for students to gain knowledge of other cultures. Student responses showed evidence of students having learned about similarities and differences between Iowa and Yucatán birthday celebrations, as well as information about a Christmas celebration unique to Yucatán. Students also were able to identify several products and practices of Yucatán's culture—tortilla, piñata, palm-leaf house, Chichen Itzá, and the Posada celebration.

An additional goal of the unit was to help students make connections with other disciplines and acquire information while learning Spanish. The student journals revealed that students were able to identify locations on the map of Yucatán, Mexico, make comparisons between the weather of Yucatán and their home state, and demonstrated an understanding of ancient counting system of the Maya from zero to twenty.

As an alternative assessment tool, the dialogue journal is obviously very useful for obtaining direct information from the student. The evidence gained from review and analysis, however, also points to the value of the dialogue journal as an alternative assessment in another way. For example, students could write about and give evidence of their learning of Mayan counting in a variety of ways. This finding provides evidence that the dialogue journal gave students an opportunity to use higher-order thinking skills and provided direct evidence of their learning and their own unique perspective on what was taught.

Analysis of the student journal responses . . . gave ample evidence of learning related to the two goals of Cultures and Connections.

Teacher Focus Group Analysis

The teacher-researcher set up a matrix different from that used in the analysis of the student journals for analysis of the teacher focus groups. This new matrix was created because the comments of the teachers were less detailed and less focused on the Yucatán unit content than the student

journals and contained less detail about student learning. To analyze the focus group transcripts, it was helpful to use a combination of ethnographic summary and content analysis.

The standards goals that were most evident in the teacher focus group discussions were those of Cultures and Connections, as was found in the analysis of student journals. In addition, the matrix for the teacher focus groups reveals remarkably similar observations by teachers of both the journal and non-journal students. There was one exception, however. One teacher of journal students knew more details about the Yucatán curriculum than any of the other teachers. According to her comments, her understanding is due to her involvement with the student journals; she read each journal looking for transfer of grade-appropriate writing skills.

Making Connections and Awareness of Cultures in the *Fiestas de Yucatán* Unit

Comments from teachers participating in the two focus groups were designated by a number (1 was used for the focus group of teachers of journal students, and 2 for the focus group of teachers of non-journal students) and an identifying letter (identifying the teacher). The teachers agreed that the *Fiestas de Yucatán* curriculum fosters a) cultural awareness of practices, products, and perspectives different from students' own, and b) awareness of the existence of languages other than English:

> 1J: They wanted to do it [journal writing] in Spanish. They had a better concept of what a different language is. They would come up to me and say [for their journal writing] "How do you say such and such in Spanish?" Students became more aware that we just don't speak English in the world.

> 1N: It's good that the kids have been exposed to a different culture.

> 2J: I think symbols of the country, like the flag, they were able to recognize. . . . And knowing that tortilla is something that is kind of a staple food of Mexico. I mean when she made those in class I think that was really good for them to get to taste the tortillas and really experience that first hand.

Teachers also mentioned this cultural awareness as they discussed evidence of their students applying their learning in Spanish class to the literature class:

> 2U: It [the story] was about a birthday. They [students and teacher in the Spanish class] talked about celebrations so we compared that to other celebrations the Mexicans had versus our culture and how we celebrate birthdays.

> 2S: Last week we read the story of Roberto and there were a lot of Spanish words . . . they did a nice job of being able to repeat the words in Spanish. . . . And they knew that this was not an English word, that it was a Spanish word.

Teachers from both groups agreed that they also have observed their students make valuable connections to the curricular areas of science, math, and social studies because of what they have learned in Spanish class. The following comments address observations of students making connections in the content area of social studies in general and then in the specific area of map skills:

> 2K: Well, I noticed an understanding through my kids when I was teaching about Mexico . . . they were able to make the connection that Jeanette had taught in the time that she was with my students and . . . [they connected that with] what I had been teaching them about Mexican culture.

> 2C: I would agree with 2K. When I taught Mexico in social studies, if I would put up a map of Mexico they would say, "There is the Yucatán!" or "There is where Chichen

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Itzá is," which is exciting to see. . . . I think the kids really enjoy seeing real photographs of Jeanette in these places in Yucatán and then comparing. . . . She [Jeanette] would say in Spanish, "Students, look at the picture here." And they can see her making the tortillas and then talk about what we do in the United States.

The following two teachers discussed how their students made connections in science through comparisons of weather in Iowa and Mexico.

2J: I think they have a good understanding of the climate in Mexico [Yucatán]. She did something with the weather. . . . I think they got a real good feel for what the temperature is like there.

2C: They were able to do it . . . [by] comparing and contrasting the chart during the different months between here and there. And they were able to do that pretty much on their own.

Consensus and Dissonance from the Participating Journal Teachers

. . . journal writing is an activity they can tailor to all students' learning levels. . . .

The teachers who had participated in the journal writing revealed a divergence of opinions on two issues. First, the teachers disagreed on the value of taking time out of the school day for students to write in their Spanish journals. Second, journal teachers disagreed on whether the integration of Spanish with the grade level curriculum is a worthwhile endeavor.

1M: Classroom teachers don't know the language so how can we support each other [in integrating content from other disciplines].

1J: If they're just getting it in English (math concepts, for example) it would be too hard for them to transfer it into Spanish.

1D: She's real good about maps. My kids didn't even know where Yucatán was. She showed them where the cities were, like Mérida and Chichen Itzá . . . and where the sea was. That really helps when we're introducing them to maps that they've had those skills ahead of time. Now 2K is doing maps and it seems to be easier. . . . You can [also] incorporate [English writing skills] into their journal writing.

1M: We don't have enough time to teach what we're supposed to, what we're required to teach in many ways. So to add this [Spanish] curriculum in, then we're taking away from something else. It's a trade-off. Because we don't have enough time to do what we're supposed to do. We seem to add and add and add. And we never take anything out.

1D: So you just have to focus on what you think is important, and go from there, right?

1M: But if we think about the world that these kids are going to live in, it's a necessity. They've got to understand more about other languages and cultures.

There was consensus among the teachers on the use of the dialogue journal as an alternative assessment for second grade students. Teachers' comments indicate that journal writing is an activity they can tailor to all students' learning levels:

1L: I adapted that [letting students express themselves in drawings] to the kids who I knew couldn't write sentences. I said, "Just draw a picture for her. . . ." And then [when] I knew my kids were more capable, then [I said], "Yes, you write sentences."

1D: And it depended on the child, too. Like, if it was a special ed child, a picture is fine. But if it was a regular child, I expected two sentences. And if it was one of my top students, I expected a page full. So it just depends, you know, on what your expectations were for the child.

Parent Questionnaire Analysis

The same categories used with the student journals were used with the parent questionnaires so the data from the two sources could be directly

compared. In analyzing parent responses, it is evident that for some parents this was their first opportunity to discover how foreign language can be taught in a thematic unit that addresses varied topics.

> B45: I was impressed by the variety of topics that J—— learned about. Also, that J—— could still recall a lot of details and information after so many months.
>
> A 27: I'm impressed with the number of words of Spanish C—— has been exposed to and understands. I feel the journal idea is a good one.
>
> B50: You really covered a lot of material. A—— got to know Yucatán well.
>
> B52: I was impressed with the variety of activities that were included on the pretend trip. They provided an enormous opportunity for learning. What a great avenue for learning! Thank you!

The parent matrix revealed that they have a less-detailed or a less content-focused view of the curriculum than do the students. This occurred in large part because parents reflected on and wrote about all of their child's entries as a whole rather than on the nine selected questions used for the content analysis of student journals. Thus, the frequencies of their responses on the categories on the student journal matrix are not as noteworthy.

The teacher-researcher reconfigured the categories for parent comments into broader themes. The reconfigured themes are as follows: a) making connections to science, b) making connections to social studies, c) a greater awareness of cultural diversity, and d) learning to communicate in Spanish.

Making connections to the elementary curriculum through science was observed primarily in parents' observation about the teaching of weather. A total of 85% of the parents indicated they were impressed that their child had learned so much about the weather in Iowa and Yucatán. A total of 74% of the parents made comments related to social studies concepts they heard about from their child in their journal discussion.

Next in order of significance to parents is the theme of journal writing. Journal comments related to the following aspects of the Spanish class: the interaction between the Spanish teacher and their child, the art work in the journal, and student writing skills in English used to discuss learning in the Spanish class. A total of 62% of the parents commented in their questionnaires on one of these three aspects of their child's learning.

Parent questionnaires also revealed that 54% of the parents were impressed that their child had learned so much Spanish during their imaginary trip to Yucatán. A third of the parents indicated that they did not realize their child could learn about so many different topics while at the same time learn Spanish (33%). Parent comments about culture centered around three themes: celebrations of Yucatán (50%), making comparisons between cultures (46%), and learning about foods different from those typically eaten in Iowa (49%).

According to the interpretations of parents after reading and discussing the journals with their children, the national standards of Communications, Cultures, and Connections are evident in the *Fiestas de Yucatán* curriculum unit. The evidence from teachers through their observations, although different from those available through the parent responses to the student journals, also indicates that the *Fiestas de Yucatán* curriculum does address these three goals of the national standards. In addition, the act of parents reading the student journals is valuable in itself. This reading allows for important communication to occur between school and home that is often lost in the busy lives of families today. This communication is evidence of an additional goal of the national student standards—the Communities goal—being met through the teaching of this unit.

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Discussion

Assessment of the Standards in a FLEX Program Setting. The plethora of recently created elementary school foreign language programs and the dissemination of the standards for foreign language learning have fomented discussion of assessment in two important areas. A review of literature indicates that there is an urgent need for evaluation of elementary foreign language programs as to the effect that these programs have on young learners. There is also a need for research that investigates developmentally appropriate techniques for assessing student progress.

By teaching culture in Spanish this program is intensified.

The majority of elementary foreign language programs in existence continue to be of the exploratory type (FLEX), a program design that precludes extensive assessment because of time limitations. FLEX programs typically comprise 1%–5% of the school day (Curtain & Pesola, 1994). An important question about FLEX programs is what teachers, parents, and administrators can expect from an exploratory program's limited instructional time.

The program on which this study was based is a case in point with regard to limited instructional time and a lack of assessment. Large numbers of students (the teacher-researcher instructs 17 classes per day with approximately 25 students in each class) with minimum instructional time (15 minutes per class) provide little opportunity to assess student progress or program effectiveness.

Teaching beginning learners in the target language uses effectively the limited instructional time that is a characteristic of FLEX programs. The depth of learning is significant in the analysis of student journals, teacher comments, and parent questionnaires throughout the relatively short time period of this unit (a total of 24 lessons of 15 minutes each or six hours total of instruction). In light of this evidence, the delivery of the curriculum (the instructional strategies used) within an exploratory program setting must not be overlooked when considering the findings of this study.

Furthermore, a common misconception is that culture, in order to be comprehensible to the student, must be taught in English. As Met and Rhodes (1990) explain, "the intensity of a program is defined not only by the amount of time dedicated to it, but also by the use of language for communication and time on task" (p. 8). By teaching culture in Spanish this program is intensified.

Finally, when generalizing results of this study to other research settings, several cautions must be considered. First, duplication of the research setting would be difficult. Second, while the author's teacher-researcher role makes the qualitative nature of this study appropriate, it is impossible not to discount her bias in interpreting results. Lastly, some consideration must be given to the potential bias of the teacher focus group members in their contributions to the data. All of the teacher participants have been, and continue to be, strong supporters of elementary school foreign language education.

Dialogue Journal as an Assessment Tool. Student journal evidence from this study becomes more powerful when the limited amount of time available for the foreign language classes is considered. The evidence from the journals reveals that it is possible to surpass the minimum goals of learning "about" language and "exploration" of culture considered normal in an exploratory elementary foreign language program. The student journals illustrate that effective use of foreign language instructional strategies appropriate for young learners allows students to experience culture and make curricular connections. Teachers commented on these instructional strategies, and parents observed the results of these strategies through communication with their child about the Spanish journal.

A related goal of the national foreign language standards is Communities. While parents of the non-journal-writing students may have had the opportunity to share in their child's Spanish class learning, the parents of the journal-writing students had a unique advantage. The journal group had the visual and written documentation of student's self-reflection. Rogers (1989) would call the dialogue journal proof of the "experienced" curriculum. The experienced curriculum can be very different from the planned curriculum or the taught curriculum because each child brings to the classroom his or her unique perspective.

The benefits of the dialogue journal home-school communication are not limited to parents and children. The teacher-researcher benefits as well. In addition to being able to provide evidence of students' learning, the effectiveness of the teacher-researcher as a curriculum planner is improved through the feedback provided by dialogue journals. Reading and responding to student journals provides an opportunity to reflect upon and improve the planned and the taught curricula.

As an assessment tool, the dialogue journal is an effective alternative assessment. It serves as a direct measure of what the students are learning as it encourages them to use higher-order thinking skills. While the journal is used to assess the learner, it also instructs the learner through dialogue with the teacher-researcher, who clarifies or affirms student comments about learning. For classroom teachers who recognize in this project a potential transfer of English language writing skills, the dialogue journal has the potential for integration with the language arts curriculum.

For this exploratory program, a major disadvantage of the dialogue journal is the time it takes to read and respond to the student journals. If the teacher-researcher were to respond to students in all of her 17 second-grade classes, the task would be overwhelming. The logistics of making sure even one extra minute was available after class to discuss with students their next journal writing assignment proved to be quite a challenge at times. Occasionally it was also difficult to find time to read before leaving for the next class even one student's entry in response to the question related to the previous class period. However, given the lack of any other assessment, this project will provide invaluable evidence of this program's value in terms of student learning.

As an assessment tool for second grade students, the dialogue journal has proven to be developmentally appropriate. Finding a suitable assessment tool for both teacher and student in a program of limited instructional time is difficult. Since the goal of the foreign language program is not proficiency, the dialogue journal written in English is especially appropriate as a formative assessment.

Conclusions and Implications of Findings

Three strands of data that analyze the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers show how the goals of the national standards for foreign language learning are being met through the *Fiestas de Yucatán* curriculum unit. The limitations of the setting for this study, a program wherein students purportedly only learn "about" language and "explore" culture, and the evidence of three perspectives about this thematic unit, intensify the value of this study. This study provides evidence on how a meaningful curriculum, taught in limited instructional time, can surpass the minimum goals expected of an exploratory foreign language program in an elementary school and can reinforce the standard course of study, social studies in particular. Parents, teachers, administrators, and students should expect that in a FLEX program students will learn social studies content taught in the foreign language.

The *Fiestas de Yucatán* curriculum

This study provides evidence on how a meaningful curriculum, taught in limited instructional time, can surpass the minimum goals expected of an exploratory foreign language program in an elementary school. . . .

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unit as taught in a FLEX program setting does have value when measured according to the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning (1996). Gaining evidence of learning in the goal areas of Cultures and Connections is possible through a thematic unit design that incorporates effective instructional strategies despite the limitations of an exploratory foreign language program.

These findings enhance the paucity of research in the profession in the following ways. First, researchers such as Donato (1998) and Shohamy (1998) discuss the importance of multiple methods of assessing the young language learner. This research serves as a model for an alternative assessment that is developmentally appropriate for young second language learners. Second, this research serves as a method of assessing each child at his or her developmentally appropriate level. Third, while analyzing home-school communications was not part of the research question, this research demonstrates how effective home-school communication can take place through the student sharing of a dialogue journal with parents and family. Fourth, this research provides a model for addressing the goals of Cultures and Connections to the grade level curriculum through instructional delivery of a thematic unit taught in Spanish. The data suggest that student dialogue journals provide documentation of student learning from a cultural unit taught in Spanish.

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Appendix A: *Fiestas de Yucatán* Curriculum Unit

In September the teacher begins Lesson One of the *Fiestas de Yucatán* curriculum unit with a review of previously learned vocabulary and expressions related to colors, weather, and commands. These expressions, and new ones taught in the unit, are periodically recycled.

In lesson four, the teacher discusses with students the importance of using their imagination in the next Spanish class when they will "travel" to Yucatán. In preparation, students locate Yucatán and their home state of Iowa on a map. In doing so, they make the first of many comparisons in the unit—comparisons of size and location.

In lesson five, students board a "real" airplane made out of a large sheet of laminated bulletin board paper marked with "real" numbered seats. The teacher-researcher, wearing a pilot's hat, gives instructions for boarding the plane, eating and sleeping on the plane, and disembarking. Throughout the "flight," students watch the hours go by on a clock manipulative. Upon their safe "arrival" in Yucatán, students deplane and discover how hot it is in September in Yucatán. Singing a weather song learned in first grade helps students compare the weather in Yucatán and their own community. As a preview of the four locations in Yucatán they will "visit," students view and discuss photographs, gaining an awareness of additional similarities and differences between Yucatán and their own community.

In lesson seven, students view houses in Mérida (the capital city of Yucatán) and Tinum (a Mayan village). In general, the houses in Mérida look different from the houses in Tinum because in Tinum the roofs are made of palm leaves. Students also look at photographs of the great pyramid at Chichen Itzá (Mayan ruins) and briefly, in English, discuss what the word *ancient* means. In lesson eight the teacher-researcher introduces students to the ancient numerals of the Maya. After observing the pattern of numbers from one to six, students predict how the Maya might have written numbers seven through thirteen.

The teacher retells the first-grade story, *The Rainbow and the Birds* (lessons nine and ten) to recycle and spiral key vocabulary for the unit. Students attach meaning to key words and phrases as they act out the words. For example, a bird is indicated by thumbs intertwined and fingers moving as a bird would fly.

In lesson thirteen each student receives a weather comparison chart. Using the weather chart the teacher has completed on a transparency each day in class, students copy key expressions for the weather of their home state and Yucatán during September and October. The teacher then presents spring temperatures in their

home state and Yucatán. Because the temperatures for Yucatán are extremely warm for the months of March, April, and May, students discover that the concept of spring for them is different from what they might experience in Yucatán. At this point, the teacher reads the story *De Colores*, using the big book as students perform actions for familiar vocabulary.

In lesson fifteen students take a brief "side trip" to the countryside. During this trip they view slides of locations previously learned, review the weather for springtime and the current month of November, and see how tortillas are made in the village. *(Note: See* Learning Languages *3(1), p. 15 for a photograph of tortilla making taken by the author while in Yucatán.)* Lessons sixteen and seventeen address the topic of tortillas and corn with a story about Quetzalcoatl, a figure of ancient Mexico's mythology, and a demonstration lesson on tortilla making.

During the month of November students learn about their first celebration in the Yucatán, a Mexican birthday as seen through the eyes of María in the big book, *Mi Cumpleaños* (My Birthday). Lessons sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen help children sequence a series of events related to María's birthday, beginning with her family singing *Las Mañanitas* to the breaking of a piñata.

The focus on celebrations continues through December with *las Posadas* (nine celebrations occurring before December 25). As students watch a mini-drama of people (Fischer-Price figures) playing the part of Yucatecans knocking on the doors of houses (made from small milk cartons), they experience the sense of community engendered by this pre-Christmas celebration. Throughout the demonstration, the teacher reminds students that this is a celebration unique to Yucatán. She emphasizes the sense of community these celebrations foster and de-emphasizes the religious aspects (as required by the school district).

Before actually role-playing a Posada procession during class, students "view" the Posada celebration—first through a book reading of *Nine Days to Christmas* and second through a transparency activity that simulates the Posada procession. In lesson twenty-one students participate in a "real" Yucatecan Posada. Three large tagboard, palm-leaf house fronts provide doors behind which two student volunteers stand. As the class proceeds from one house to the next they discover that only at the last house (the one with the piñata) are they welcomed in to celebrate. Paper lanterns and singing create a feeling of procession, while hot chocolate and buñuelos create the sense of celebration in the last house.

After the winter break only a few classes remain before the return "flight" to the students' home communities. Students discuss January's weather by using the comparative weather chart and review the songs, stories, and activities of the unit. Students experience the "trip" home by again boarding the paper airplane. Upon "returning home," students compare the weather of Yucatán on the day they left with their community's current temperature.

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Appendix B. Student Journal Questions Selected for Analysis

7. Mérida is a large city and Tinum is a small town in Yucatán. What did you notice about the houses in those places?

8. Today you saw some pictures of Yucatán. Here is a list of the names of places we will be visiting. Can you tell something about each place?

11. What did you notice about the countryside in Yucatán?

15. Today we pretended to visit the countryside. What do you notice about the countryside in Yucatán? Is it the same or different from the countryside in (home state)?

16. Tell how María celebrated her birthday in Yucatán.

19. Describe in English or in Spanish how to write an ancient Mayan number from Chichen Itzá. Here are some words you will need: Spanish: *rectángulo, círculo, uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco, seis, siete, ocho, nueve, diez, once, doce, trece, catorce, quince* (rectangle, circle, one, two, three. . . fifteen).

22. Tell about our Posada celebration today. What was it like? What did we do?

25. Our pretend trip to Yucatán is almost over. When you really visit Yucatán, what would be your favorite month to visit? Tell why. It might help to look at your weather chart.

28. You are ready to tell your friends about your trip to Yucatán. What was the best part of your trip? Would you ever like to go back? Tell why.

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NNELL Members Receive Palmes Academiques Award

NNELL members TERRY CACCAVALE and RICHARD LADD received the prestigious Palmes Academiques Award from the French government this spring. Terry is the Massachusetts NNELL representative and is also the foreign language coordinator in Holliston, MA, where she began the French Immersion program and was its first teacher. Richard is a high school French teacher at Ipswich High School in Ipswich, MA. The award, which was presented at a ceremony in Holliston, was attended by current and previous French immersion students and parents. *Congratulations Terry and Richard!*

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WWW Activity for Early Language Learners

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Curriculum and Staff Development in Instructional Television

Level: French, Grades 1–2

Targeted Standards:

A. National Student Standards Foreign Languages

Communication

1.1 Students ask and answer questions about each other's pictures.
1.2 Students listen and interpret the teacher's instructions.

Cultures

2.2 Students use an authentic educational tool produced by the target culture.

Connections

3.1 Students reinforce math and science concepts taught in the regular classroom.
3.2 Students ask each other questions to find out what the other's picture looks like.

B. National Student Standards Foreign Languages (cnets.iste.org)

1. Basic Operations and Concepts: Students will learn to manipulate the mouse.
2. Technology Productivity Tools: Students will produce a finished product that will be printed.

Web Site Needed:

URL: www.lescale.net/album.htm
Site Name: l'escale

This site is a Québecois site used for French-speaking children ages 4–12. For this activity, students will focus on the section *Images à colorier.*

Procedure:

Previewing Activities: Before beginning the lesson, review parts of the body and colors with students. Explain that the students will be participating in a listening activity using the computer and later, a speaking activity with a partner.

Viewing Activities:

1. Lead students to the Web site step-by-step as they get accustomed to clicking on the mouse and navigating the Internet.
2. Once all students have arrived at www.lescale.net/album.htm, explain that they are going to color electronically today. Students will choose a picture to color from the 3 choices. Note: Pictures are changed periodically so check the site to see what changes may have to be made to the lesson.
3. Explain that as you call out a color, students are to click on that color and apply it to their paintbrush. Then specify a part of the picture to be colored, for example, color the head blue; color the left hand red, etc. Keep a tally of which color is used for which part to later assess students' language comprehension. Monitor students' activity by walking around and viewing what they are doing.
4. After specifying several colors orally, allow students to complete their picture independently as they wish.
5. Once students are finished coloring

their pictures, have them print them out, write their name on theirs, and prepare for the follow-up activity (to be done in the next class session). Print out a blank version of each of the pictures the students might have colored and put them on display in the front of the room.

6. Students may return to this site during free time to explore and play games that relate to the curriculum being taught.

Follow-up and Extension Activity:

The following activity will allow students to listen and respond to each other as they ask and answer questions describing their pictures. Display the two questions and a list of body parts and colors students may refer to as they answer.

1. Model questions from the student handout (Fig. 1) by asking individual students the following questions:
   a) *De quelle couleur est son nez?* (What color is the nose?)
   b) *Quelle partie du corps est rouge?* (What body part is red?)
2. Model how to complete the handout by writing a student's one-word answer on an overhead transparency of the form.
3. Have students practice asking questions of other students in the large group.
4. Assign partners and have students take turns asking questions of their partner. Have students write down their partner's answer on the handout.
5. When students have competed the handouts, or when time is up, have students turn in the handouts with the pictures they colored.

Assessment:

Monitor the activity to encourage students to use the target language. Collect students' work and evaluate it based on the language skill students demonstrated and their participation in the activity.

Figure 1. Handout

Interrogez votre partenaire!

Complétez le tableau selon le dessin de *votre partenaire.*

Nom: ***nom de celui qui interroge***	**Image de:** ***nom de l'élèv***	**Classe de:** ***nom de la maîtresse de la classe***
De quelle couleur. . .		
. . . est son nez?		
. . . sont ses pattes?		
. . . sont ses yeux?		
. . . est son ventre?		
. . . est sa corne?		
Quelle partie du corps est. . .		
. . . rouge?		
. . . vert?		
. . . bleu?		
. . . marron?		
. . . jaune?		
. . . noir?		
. . . rose?		
. . . violet?		

Japanese Distance Learning: A Kansas Summer Program for Children

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Making foreign language available to all children in Kansas is a challenge due to the insulation and isolation in the Midwest. Children and adults alike have little exposure to any foreign culture and still less to Asian languages and cultures. Finding foreign language teachers for small isolated rural areas is in itself almost impossible, not to mention the fact that school districts have difficulty funding these programs. With only a few school districts offering elementary school foreign language programs, it is difficult to expose children to the most commonly taught foreign language in the state, Spanish, much less to one of the less commonly taught languages such as Japanese. The Southeast Kansas Interactive Distance Learning Network, a program under the umbrella of Greenbush, the Southeast Kansas Education Service Center, therefore, plays an important role by making foreign language accessible to an increasing number of children.

Greenbush, which was established in 1976, offers more than 180 cooperative educational programs and services to school districts, students, families, and communities. The Southeast Kansas Interactive Distance Learning Network is one of the programs under the division of Education Support Services. All programs at Greenbush are designed around the needs of school districts and provide services that otherwise would be unavailable or unaffordable.

Program Design

The program here described represents a successful attempt to make Japanese and the culture of Japan available to Kansas children. It began during the summer of 1999. Summer Japanese and Spanish programs have been taught every year since 1994, thanks to two Foreign Language Assistance Program grants; in addition, Chinese and Russian were each offered one summer. In each case, the instructor developed the curriculum. The instructor in 1999 had taught using the existing curriculum, first written in 1994, during the summers of 1997 and 1998. A new curriculum was designed during a methods course in elementary school foreign language offered by the Foreign Language Department at Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas. The new curriculum was designed to include many interactive, communicative activities and to integrate aspects of the language and culture into the course. The main purpose of this curriculum was to introduce children ages 9 to 12 to the language and culture of Japan. The

program model, an auxiliary FLEX Program, which is described by Curtain and Pesola (1994), was chosen for this project based on the amount of student contact time available, which was two hours daily for two weeks in a one-time experience. The class was taught through interactive distance learning. The participants in this program were groups of 12 children in each of four schools. Each of the classrooms had a facilitator who did not speak the target language. The instructor physically visited each group of students approximately once each week. On other days, the students saw the instructor only on television screens. The distance learning network is based on fiber optic technology and provides broadcast-quality real-time audio and video signals. The classrooms are approximately 35 miles distant one from another. Each classroom has four television screens so that each group could see and hear themselves and the other three schools. Because this was a summer program, participation was voluntary and no grades were given.

Two main ideas guided the decisions defining the characteristics of this program: 1) make the children believe that they can be connected in some way to an Asian culture, and 2) make them understand that they can be successful in communicating what they are learning in Japanese. Keeping this in mind, and as a result of a class discussion on characteristics and strategies of immersion programs based on the discussion of the topic in Curtain and Pesola (1994), the instructor developed the following guidelines for the program:

- The target language was used naturally for communication as much as possible; therefore, it was a class in the target language rather than a class about the language.
- Children were encouraged to use the language within the limits of their capabilities, with a minimum of error correction, which was limited to errors of meaning.
- There was no direct grammar instruction; instead the grammar presented was dictated by circumstance not sequence.

In addition, a distinctive attribute of this program was the usage of the target language clearly separated from the usage of native language by means of a two-sided sign the instructor wore. One side said "English being spoken here" and the other side said "*Nihongo wo hanashite imasu*" (Japanese being spoken here). Paramount to this program was the use of nonverbal responses, Total Physical Response (TPR) activities (Asher, 1993), group responses leading to individual responses, and the integration of language related activities and cultural activities that were hands-on.

A typical day in the program begins with the students changing their outside shoes for inside slippers they have brought from home. In Japan, shoes that are worn outside are never worn inside. Students enjoy symbolically defining their Japanese classroom with this small physical act. Once in the classroom, the instructor and a student volunteer at each site bow formally and greet the class in Japanese.

A typical day in the program begins with the students changing their outside shoes for inside slippers they have brought from home.

The class starts with a review of previously taught vocabulary by using TPR and/or physical prompts such as flashcards, or by the instructor touching classroom items to elicit student responses. New vocabulary is introduced utilizing a mix of TPR, physical hints, and dramatization sometimes involving a hand puppet that speaks only Japanese. Students are encouraged to first recognize new words and respond to them nonverbally, then to begin producing the words as they feel comfortable. For example, when colors and shapes are being taught the instructor might say "*sankaku*" (triangle) and the students could hold up one of their construction paper cutouts to show they have understood. After some practice the teacher would hold up a shape and ask "*Maru desu*

ka? Sankaku desu ka?" (Is it a circle? Is it a triangle?) and the students would respond with the correct word. Then the instructor turns her two-sided sign to "English being spoken here" and invites the students to watch a short video, in English, about Japanese children of similar age (Collins & Reichart, 1998). A question/answer session in English follows, during which the students are encouraged to discuss both similarities and differences between their lives and the lives of the children in the video.

During a break time of 15 minutes midway through the day, students fold an *origami* cup to get a drink of water and eat, with chopsticks, a small Japanese snack prepared by the on-site facilitator. The making of the *origami* cup was taught on the first day of class just before the break. The class then resumes with the students participating in a culturally based craft activity related to the day's lesson. Examples include making a cherry blossom tree for spring, making tissue paper carp for Children's Day, or folding *origami*. Students are motivated to use Japanese words and phrases whenever possible while participating in the activity, for example, telling the colors on their carp or the name of the *origami* model.

Finally the class closes with the teacher and the student volunteers again leading the class in a formal bow and greeting.

Culmination of the Program

During the second week of the program students have a little time each day to organize and practice for the Parents Pageant, which is held on the last day. On-site facilitators and the teacher help each individual or small group identify one of the class activities that they particularly liked in order to create a short presentation about it. Students are encouraged to take an active role in the organizing process and to take ownership for individual roles in the activity. On the last day, the first hour is a demonstration by a local karate organization. The karate instructor explains the traditional place of karate and other types of self-defense in Japanese society and why people might study a martial art.

The second hour of the last day is the Parents Pageant. Students invite parents, siblings, grandparents, and neighbors to come visit, resulting in small classrooms being packed to capacity. Each student or group of students takes turns showcasing one of the things they have learned, while the guests at all four sites watch. For a finale, the students at all four sites form a chorus and sing the songs they have learned in Japanese. The on-site facilitator then presents the students with bilingual certificates of completion and students say good-bye and take their classroom materials home.

Conclusion

At the end of the two-week program students, parents, and facilitators were asked to respond to surveys evaluating the program. The response was overwhelmingly positive. Parents stated that their children shared the language and other skills learned in class with the whole family. When asked how the class could be improved, one parent responded, *"I don't think there is anything you could improve upon. Sam has enjoyed this class and hates to see it come to an end. You have brought another country and their* (sic) *customs to these students and made them real, instead of fairy tale land. Sam enjoyed this class so much last year he wanted to take it again this year and would take it again next year if allowed. He has hopes of going to Japan someday and seeing the land, people, and culture firsthand."*

He has hopes of going to Japan someday and seeing the land, people, and culture firsthand.

More than 70% of the students stated that they wished the class were longer and, when asked what they liked least about the class, many answered in this vein, *"I had no dislikes in this class at all whatsoever. That means I liked everything."* Craft projects from Japan were very popular

with nearly all students. Two comments seem particularly appropriate. *"I liked origami because you can make cool stuff from a simple piece of paper." "I liked origami because it taught a few people, like myself, patience."* One student said, *"If I work somewhere (in the future) like an amusement park or something, I might need to know that particular language and that would help the other person."*

In sum, the students were enthusiastic about all activities and expressed gratifying eagerness to show off their accomplishments at the Parents Pageant that concluded the program. It became clear to the instructor that by encouraging each child to take linguistic risks and by offering a consistent model of correct, natural language usage the teacher can help all students have a memorable and valuable language learning experience.

The instructor allowed herself to be guided to some extent by the interests and ideas of the students and by serendipity. A chance discussion with a student after watching a video led to the idea of students bringing slippers to class so that they would have "inside shoes" and "outside shoes," as is the custom in Japan. Some parents reported that it was the first time their children had ever, voluntarily, worn slippers.

The results of this program have been more than rewarding: students greet the instructor in Japanese when they meet while shopping or in other casual encounters. More important, several students have come back as class helpers, and others have further developed their skills in *origami*, and the Japanese game of *"Go."*

These results show that the two big hurdles of making the children believe that they could ever be somehow connected to the Japanese language and its culture, and making them think they could be successful in that attempt were successfully overcome. This program contributed in a creative and delightful way to break down the barriers of the isolation and the insulation of the Midwest for the children, their families, and their friends, and involved the community in initiating the children into a more global perspective so much advocated among the foreign language profession and the teaching community. Greenbush hopes to continue the summer language programs as long as children express an interest in attending.

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Featured News

Eighth Grader Wins National Contest for Advocacy Letter

CONGRATULATIONS to Fiona Gispen, an eighth-grade student from Oxford, Mississippi, who won a national contest for her letter to her U.S. Representative advcating the importance of early language learning. The contest involved seventh- and eighth-grade students writing a letter to their congressional representatives on an issue of interest or concern. These letters were then entered into a contest in which one winner from each state was chosen to attend the RespecTeen National Youth Forum in Washington, D.C. Below is Fiona's winning letter. Her message comes across strong and clear. Maybe she should send this letter to all members of Congress!

Dear Congressman Wicker:

What do we call someone who speaks two languages? Bilingual. What is someone who speaks three languages? Trilingual. And what is someone who speakes just one language? American! Foreign language education in the United States must improve if our country is to remain competitive. As the world of business gets bigger and bigger, the real world seems to get smaller and smaller. More than one quarter of U.S. GDP now comes from exports. Countries are ever more closely intertwined in business relations. Therefore, it is exceedingly important that Americans understand foreign cultures. The first step is learning a foreign language.

In Europe, foreign language education often begins in elementary school. In most schools in America, it begins in high school! Younger students learn a second language much more easily than older ones. If they could begin earlier, students would have greater fluency in their chosen language by their senior year. Today, many students can't speak a word of a foreign language even after four years of studying one! Many students choose not to participate in a foreign language program because of peer pressure or lack of interest. Currently, quite a few schools don't even teach foreigh languages. Studying a foreign language should be mandatory.

Foreign language teachers should be encouraged to become fluent in both the written and spoken forms of the language they teach. As it is now, many teachers just learn a little ahead of the students, out of the same book. They should also be tested on their ability to speak, write, and teach their foreign langeuage. The conversational form of the language should be emphasized.

In hopes of making my dreams come true, I would like to start a club for the promotion of foreign languages. I wish that in years to come second languages in public schools would become as important as English and math classes are today. I hope that you agree and will work in support of foreign languages in our schools. Not only will you be changing that joke; you'll be saving America.

Sincerely,

Fiona Gispen

Editor's Note: As a means of encouraging teens to understand and participate in the legislative issues that affect their lives, the Lutheran Brotherhood, a nonprofit financial services organization, provides a curriculum called RespecTeen Speak for Yourself to seventh- and eighth-grade students throughout the nation. This contest was part of that curriculum. For more information, visit www.RespecTeen.org.

Featured News

WHAT A SMALL WORLD!

Dear Mrs. Semmer,

My name is Andrea Dubenezic, and I am currently working for Nancy Rhodes at the Center for Applied Linguistics. I am helping Nancy out as the membership secretary for NNELL. I came across your name and immediately recognized it! You were my Spanish teacher when I lived in Colorado (I have a twin sister and a brother who also took Spanish classes from you—we attended high school around 1992–1994). Anyway, I just wanted to let you know that I really appreciate the interest in Spanish that you gave me. I majored in Spanish in college and remember all of the wonderful classes that I had with you at Summit High School. I hope that all is well in Colorado!

Sincerely,
Andrea Dubenezic

Note: Martie Semmer is NNELL's second vice president.

Highlights of National Board Certification for Foreign Language Teachers

Martie Semmer, Facilitator, WLOE National Board Certification Project

Sponsored by
American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese
National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center, Iowa State University

Basics You Need to Know about National Board Certification

- December 3, 2001, marks the first date ever for foreign language teachers to become candidates and begin the National Board Certification (NBC) process. The two certification areas for which foreign language teachers are eligible for NBC are 1) Early and Middle Childhood/World Languages Other than English, and 2) Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/World Languages Other than English. Certification in French, German, and Spanish will be offered in 2001-2002; additional languages will be added in subsequent years.

- The standards document for both certificate areas is *World Languages Other than English (WLOE) Standards for Teachers of Students Ages 3–18+*. It is highly recommended that teachers become very familiar with these standards for accomplished teachers before becoming a candidate. Current NBC Teachers often state that prior in-depth knowledge of the standards is the important foundation to successful completion of the NBC process. To purchase the WLOE document call 1-800-

22TEACH. It is featured on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Web site (www.nbpts.org), where other information and free materials relating to NBC are also located.

- Teachers who decide to become NBC Teacher Candidates for the 2001–02 school year should order the free application guide entitled *Guide to National Board Certification* by calling 1-800-22TEACH. Teachers are required to complete and submit the application before they can receive "the box" with instructions for the certification process. The application and fee should be sent during the summer or fall of 2001.

- The K–12 foreign language student standards, *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in The 21st Century*, figure prominently in the WLOE document, as do teaching examples for Chinese, Classical Languages, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and other languages. Teachers will want to have focused their teaching on the student standards before pursuing WLOE certification. To purchase a copy of the student standards, call 1-800-627-0629.

- More and more school districts are providing support for NBC pre-candidates, candidates, and teachers. Teachers should look into their respecitve district's incentives and opportunities. Ongoing peer contact is helpful during the intense and demanding assessment process. For this reason, it is a good idea to be a part of a cohort group, even if the other NBC candidates in the group are not foreign language teachers.

Opportunities to Learn More

- A half-day workshop on "National Board Certification for Foreign Language Teachers" will be offered at the annual conference of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in November 2001 in Washington, D.C. This session will be offered by Martie Semmer, who has received NBPTS training to become a facilitator/mentor of NBC candidates and who is a member of the NBPTS Foreign Language Committee, and Marcia Rosenbusch, who is the director of the National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center at Iowa State University and vice-chair of the NBPTS Foreign Language Committee.

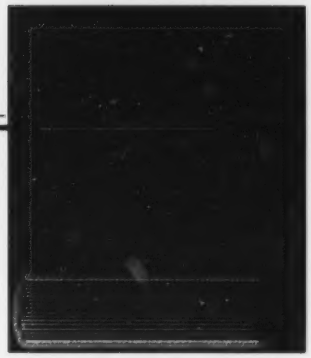
- Summer sessions on "National Board Certification for Foreign Language Teachers" will be offered by Martie Semmer at the meetings of the American Association of Teachers of French in Denver, the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese in San Francisco, and the National Network for Early Language Learning in Santa Barbara.

- Another opportunity to become familiar with the NBC process is available for teachers who have state certification in another content or certification area for which NBC is available. These teachers could become NBC assessors of portfolio entries during the summer at sites across the country for an honorarium of $125 a day. For more information call 1-800-532-1813 or access www.nbpts.org and click on "Candidate Resources."

NNELL's Involvement in Development of Standards

NNELL members who served on the NBPTS Foreign Language Committee that developed the WLOE standards include Christine Brown (cbrownglas@aol.com), Carine Feyten (feyten@typhoon.coedu.usf.edu), Marcia Rosenbusch (mrosenbu@iastate.edu), and Martie Semmer (semmer@colorado.net).

Classroom Resources



German

The following three books are available from Buch-Bruecke, 96 Sweet Road, Ballston Lake, NY 12019; 518-399-6516; Fax: 518-384-2538. Or order from the Web site at www.buch-bruecke.com.

- Röhrig, Vokmar, & Müller, Hildegard. (1995). *Hugo Hase.* Arena: Edition Bucherbar. ISBN: 3-401-07409-1. Cost is $10.60.

  Hugo Hase is the youngest member of his rabbit family. Easter is a very busy time for Hugo's family because they have to color Easter eggs and hide them for the children. Hugo always wants to help with the household chores, but unfortunately there are times when he gets into mischief and upsets his parents. When it comes time to hide the Easter eggs, however, Hugo comes up with the best ideas. This colorful book is ideal for beginning readers in the elementary school. It is perfect for practicing word recognition, and the accompanying pictures clarify the meaning of more than fifty words. This book also contains a game, which can be played with many variations.

- Delafosse, Claude. (1999). *Am Himmel und im Weltall.* Mannheim: Bibliographisches Institut. Part of the *Licht an . . .* series. ISBN: 3-411-09311-0. Cost is $10.50.

  This book will introduce elementary students (grades 4, 5, 6) to the wonders of the sky and the universe. Several pages of the book are made out of dark transparency material. This, and all books of the series *Licht an . . .*, come with a "flashlight" made out of cardboard that glows when held under the transparency page. By moving the flashlight students get a close view of objects and natural wonders that can be found in the sky and universe. Every German classroom should be equipped with the information-packed series *Licht an. . . .*

- Cohat, Elisabeth. (1998). *Am Strand.* Mannheim: Bibliographisches Institut. Part of the *Licht an . . .* series. ISBN: 3-411-09811-2. Cost is $10.50.

  Am Strand provides a fascinating insight into the life at the beach. It focuses on common animals, such as shellfish, snails, and birds and also teaches about high and low tides. This book shows the ingenious methods animals use to find food and how they survive. As with the other books from the series *Licht an . . .*, this book comes with a flashlight (see previous review).

ANNOUNCING . . .
New Publications from CREDE

Research Report 9

The Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE) has published Research Report 9 (2001), *Sociocultural Factors in Social Relationships: Examining Latino Teachers' and Paraeducators' Interactions with Latino Students*, by Lilia D. Monzó and Robert S. Rueda, University of Southern California. This report explores the impact of sociocultural factors on the relationships and interactions between Latino students and 32 Latino teachers and paraeducators. Findings suggest that teachers' and paraeducators' knowledge of students' cultures, communities, primary languages, and familiar interactional styles can facilitate meeting students' academic needs. This report extends research from Research Report 8, *Apprenticeship for Teaching: Professional Development Issues Surrounding the Collaborative Relationship Between Teachers and Paraeducators.*

AVAILABILITY: To order, send a $5 check, money order, or purchase order payable to the Center for Applied Linguistics, 4646 40th Street NW, Washington, DC 20016. Signed purchase orders may be faxed to 202-362-3740. If ordering by MasterCard or VISA, include name on card, card number, expiration date, signature, billing address, and telephone number; or call 202-362-0700. On domestic orders, include 10% shipping/handling (international orders 20%). For more ordering information, contact credepubs@cal.org. Direct inquiries about the report to CREDE at 202-362-0700 or crede@cal.org.

CREDE–NCISLA Newsletter

The latest *Talking Leaves* is a special joint issue by CREDE and NCISLA (National Center for Improving Student Learning and Achievement in Mathematics and Science). Entitled "Diverse Students Learning Mathematics and Science: Issues and Possibilities," it features the Children's Ways with Words conference, which drew researchers from across the nation to discuss how children's languages and cultures influence their learning of mathematics and science.

AVAILABILITY: This issue, Winter 2001 (Vol.5 No.1), is on-line at www.cal.org crede/pubs. It includes an online insert of Educator Resources to strengthen teachers' understanding of diverse students' ideas, available at www.cal.org/crede/pubs. To get a free print copy, e-mail crede@cal.org or call 202-362-0700.

Practitioner Brief on Two-Way Immersion Programs

CREDE has published Practitioner Brief #2, *Development and Maintenance of Two-Way Immersion Programs: Advice from Practitioners* (March 2001), by Julie Sugarman and Elizabeth R. Howard, Center for Applied Linguistics. Based on responses from principals, bilingual coordinators, and teachers in two-way immersion (TWI) programs, this brief provides advice to those practitioners implementing new TWI programs. Designing curricula, planning for assessment, training teachers, involving parents, garnering district support, and fostering long-term growth are among the issues addressed.

AVAILABILITY: View on-line at www.cal.org/crede/pubs/PracBrief2.htm.

Note: A complete list of CREDE publication is available at www.cal.org/crede/pubs/

Calendar

Summer 2001 Conferences

July 27–29, 2001
National Network for Early Language Learning and the California Foreign Language Project Summer Seminar, Santa Barbara, CA. Mari Haas, NNELL Conference Chair. E-mail: haasmarib@aol.com.

Fall 2001 Conferences

November 16–18, 2001
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Annual Convention, Washington, DC. ACTFL Headquarters, 6 Executive Plaza, Yonkers, NY 10701-6801; 914-963-8830; Fax: 914-963-1275.

Spring 2002 Conferences

March 7–9, 2002
Southwest Conference on Language Teaching, Oklahoma City, OK. Audrey Cournia, Executive Director, 1348 Coachman Dr., Sparks, NV 89434; 775-358-6943; Fax: 775-358-1605; E-mail: CourniaAudrey@cs.com; www.learnalanguage.org/swcolt

March 14–16, 2002
Southern Conference on Language Teaching, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Lynne McClendon, SCOLT Executive Director, 165 Lazy Laurel Chase, Roswell, GA 30076; 770-992-1256; Fax: 770-992-3464; E-mail: lynnemcc@mindspring.com.

March 21–23, 2002
Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Kansas City, MO. Diane Ging, Executive Director, CSC, P.O. Box 21531, Columbus, OH 43221-0531; 614-529-0109; Fax: 614-529-0321; E-mail: dging@iwayne.net.

May 2–5 2002
Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, New York, NY. Rebecca Kline, Northeast Conference at Dickinson College, P.O. Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013-28996; E-mail: nectfl@dickinson.edu.

NNELL

NNELL is an organization for educators involved in teaching foreign languages to children. The mission of the organization is to promote opportunities for all children to develop a high level of competence in at least one language in addition to their own. NNELL provides leadership, support, and service to those committed to early language learning and coordinates efforts to make language learning in programs of excellence a reality for all children.

NNELL

An organization for educators involved in teaching foreign languages to children.

MISSION: Promote opportunities for all children to develop a high level of competence in at least one language in addition to their own. This is accomplished through activities that improve public awareness and support of early language learning.

ACTIVITIES: Facilitate cooperation among organizations directly concerned with early language learning, facilitate communication among teachers, teacher educators, parents, program administrators, and policymakers; and disseminate information and guidelines to assist in developing programs of excellence.

ANNUAL MEETING: Held at the fall conference of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

OFFICERS: Elected by members through a mail ballot election held annually in the spring.

MEMBER OF: JNCL-NCLIS (Joint National Committee for Languages-National Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and International Studies).

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Visit the NNELL Web site at: www.educ.iastate.edu/nnell or E-mail nnell@cal.org

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